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JANUARY 1987
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HAPPY HAL'S HOWLINGS—

Some of the staff here around the office felt that my comments that were published as part of the predictions as to the future of comics that I made last issue were a bit harsh on the present crop of books. They were afraid that I might antagonize the readers and that I should tone them down quite a bit. While I did take some of their advice and make sure that my case was clearly stated, I felt that all of you would prefer it if I laid it on the line and was straightforward about how I feel. While I am certain that many of you won't agree with what I said, and that I will be hearing from you directly as to why I am completely wrong—and I honestly look forward to hearing that—you would not get too upset at me but would actually prefer that I didn't straddle the fence and pretend that I believed something just because it made you feel more comfortable. Am I right?

The point that I was trying to make last issue, and which started this whole discussion, is simply that while there are many interesting things being done in comic books today it has not been a simple straight line ever upward in quality. In many ways the comic books of the past, and many of the comic strips, were as well or better written and drawn than most of what we have now. That does not mean that every book done then was a gem, and certainly doesn't suggest that everything being done now is a disaster. It is simply that the industry has become dangerously self-congratulatory and I don't want the truths to be lost in a mist of self deception. There are many very good artists and writers working in the field today—and I am sure that their names spring easily to mind—but there were also top notch people in the past. There are comic books being written for an older audience today, but that was also true in the past. There are interesting experiments being tried in the medium now, but that too happened in the past.

The simple truth is that comic books as a whole are in one of their most creative periods—comparable to the best of the Golden Age, the EC Revolution of the 1950s, when some pretty good work was also being turned out over at Dell by one Carl Barks as well (!), or the early dynamic days of the Silver Age as DC rediscovered the superhero and a fledgling Marvel Comics experimented with new ways to do things. Very exciting things are happening as comics have taken the form of books, and, for the very first time in decades, are beginning to break out into the mass market. Julius Schwartz—one of the grand old men of science fiction as well as comic books—is editing a very impressive line of sf graphic novels, and any number of other companies, including Marvel of course, are turning out equally interesting new experiments. Marvel's venture into romance paperbacks along with Harlequin has the potential of creating a whole new market all by itself if it works. Yes, these are interesting times.

But like other times and other places, this summer of our hope can too easily turn into a winter of discontent if we forget the past and repeat its mistakes venturing too far into a cliquish, in-group sensibility. Instead let us reach out, let us stretch beyond just producing characters in colorful longjohns—let us spread our wings and fly forth. But let us remember our roots and how we have arrived at where we are today.

That's enough high-toned talk for one day for this comic book fan! Till next month, be good...

—HAPPY HAL

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FEATURES

Sentinels of Liberty
CAPTAIN AMERICA & IRON MAN

With a brand new writer and inker, the Armored Avenger has some pretty exciting adventures ahead! The popular team of David Michelinie and Bob Layton will be reunited for a series of spectacular high tech superheroic tales as Tony Stark rebuilds his financial empire.

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NEW MUTANTS A HERO HISTORY

The New Mutants are the second most popular team in the Marvel Universe, surpassed only by their mentors, the X-Men. James Van Hise recounts the whole tale of how they came to be, the myriad adventures they enjoyed along the way and what may lie ahead for Marvel's youngest mutants.

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COVER CHARACTERS •MARVEL COMICS; ARTWORK •MOVIE PUBLISHERS SERVICES, INC.

FEATURE NEWS

UPDATE: THE AVENGERS

Roger Stern, writer of the regular, that is East Coast, **Avengers** title has revealed that Thor will be returning to the line-up, but with a difference.

"He's under the curse of Hela, and while he can't die, he also doesn't heal. So Thor's in a lot of pain these days," Stern explains.

Namor has been missing recently, but he'll be back in the spring. A previously announced plot thread involving Namor which was supposed to continue into the Alpha Flight graphic novel has been dropped. "I think that was some odd plotline somebody had come up with where they planned to kill the Sub-Mariner. But we said that they couldn't do that because he's an Avenger!" notes Stern.

The Black Knight has proven to be a popular character in the series and although there have been fan requests for a Black Knight mini-series, none is in the works. "There is a three-part Black Knight story set to appear in **Marvel Fanfare** which takes place at the time of the Crusades and shows just how bad things were back then," Stern explains, although he isn't involved with the story himself.

Stern has greatly enjoyed working on **The Avengers** since John Buscema and Tom Palmer have reunited to handle the art chores. "It's been great! They've actually been together on the book longer now than they were when they originally worked on it over 15 years ago. It's been two years now. Tom Palmer has really been putting a lot into it and his son is a big **Avengers** fan. Whenever the pages come in, he reads them to see what's happening now."

Meanwhile on the West Coast, Steve Englehart has found that a number of the plotlines that he was developing "all fell together in a rather strange way and I decided to run with it." Although originally conceived as a seven-part story, Englehart has considered continuing the tale for one more issue for a special ending. The plotline will bring Moon Knight into the West Coast Avengers on a permanent basis.

While Hank Pym's life will be straightened out by the end of the time travel saga, he won't be reverting to any of his numerous superhero identities. That means no more Pym as Ant Man, Giant Man, Goliath or Yellowjacket!

"I've been using him as he asked to be used," Englehart explains. "In the Egghead story, where he bombed out as Yellowjacket, he said that he would never be a superhero again, so I took him at his word. However, part of straightening out his life is straightening out all these problems. But while he won't be a superhero, he will be a hero."

MARVEL RAISES PRICES

Marvel Comics plans to raise its prices on select titles beginning with the books shipping in January. While most of the line will remain at 75 cents, **Groo, Elfquest, Transformers, G.I. Joe, G.I. Joe Special Missions, Conan, Thundercats** and **Masters of the Universe** will all rise to $1. What do the books have in common? Their all licensed properties and therefore carry a higher overhead cost to the publisher. Of course, on other comic books, Marvel owns the property and does not have to pay a large licensing fee just a small royalty to the creator, and in many cases no fee at all.

Epic comic titles will also rise from $1.50 to $1.75 beginning with December shipping. The reasons cited are the normal factors, printing, production costs and so on.

NEW TITLES FROM COMICO

The first issue of **Justice Machine** will ship in January. Tony Isabella and Mike Gustovich will be handling the new series. Another new title will be **Star Blazers**, a companion to the **Robotech** trio of titles. That book will be by Doug Rice and Phil Foglio. It is planned to run as a four-issue mini-series and will be printed in full process color instead of the more common hand separations found in most comic books.

Other new titles planned for 1987 release include a **Fathom** three-issue mini-series, a **Space Ghost** one-shot special by Steve Rude and **Robotech 3-D**. There will also be a **Rocketeer Adventure Magazine** featuring stories by Dave Stevens and Mike Kaluta. Whether this last title will be delayed due to the complaint of copyright infringement due to the Rocketeer name is not known.

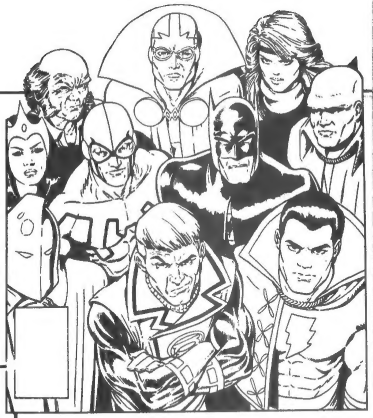
THE SILVER SURFER

—FREE AT LAST!—

December will see the first issue of a new **Silver Surfer** series from Marvel, written by Steve Englehart, drawn by Marshall Rogers and inked by Joe Rubenstein. What will set this apart from other Silver Surfer stories is that he is finally going to get off Earth.

"That's what everyone has been wanting to see," Englehart explains. "Me as well as anybody else, and I think I've come up with an interesting way for him to do it."

The first issue will be a double-sized introduction to the new era in the life of Norrin Rad.

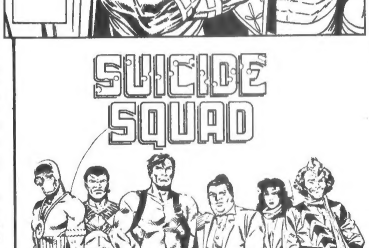


NEW WRITERS ON TITANS

After the consuming re-definition of the DC Universe in the 12-issue **Crisis on Infinite Earths** and the two-issue **History of the DC Universe**, Marv Wolfman will take a leave of absence from some of his numerous writing chores. "I never realized how much of myself I put into the **Crisis on Infinite Earths**," explains Wolfman "until I set out to write **History of the DC Universe**. Between those, my move to California and the re-launch of Superman with **The Adventures of Superman**, most of my time was spoken for. I had to give up something to retain my sanity, so I requested time off from some of my writing responsibilities."

After seven years on **The New Teen Titans**, Wolfman has willingly stepped aside to re-think the book for a few months so he can "make the Titans better in 1987." While on leave from the books, Wolfman will recover, get ahead on Superman and begin work on future projects. To accomodate this, Paul Levitz will dialogue **The New Teen Titans** beginning with issue #28 and plot issues #30 through #33 with Wolfman. "Paul was my first choice for filling in," comments Wolfman.

Meanwhile **Teen Titans Spotlight**... will take advantage of its anthology format to allow writing from a variety of people. Notes editor Mike Gold, "The whole concept lends itself to a 'roving' creative team. As we highlight different characters, we'll use completely different creative talents whose styles match the characters featured." Issues seven and eight will highlight the Hawk by Mike Baron, Jackson Guice and Larry Mahlstedt; nine will focus on the Changeling and the Doom Patrol's Robotman, written by Paul Kupperberg and illustrated by Dan Jurgens. With ten, Barbara Randall will take over as editor. That issue features Aqualad in a story that resolves from plotlines in **The New Teen Titans** Hybrid storyline and will be written by John Ostrander and drawn by Erik Larsen.



DC Comics will be spinning off two new teams from their Legends mini-series. Above you will find the line-up for the new Justice League: Batman, Captain Marvel, Blue Beetle, Mr. Miracle, Dr. Fate, J'onn J'onzz and the Guy Gardner Green Lantern; and Suicide Squad: Deadshot, Bronze Tiger, Enchantress and Captain Boomerang. Both titles will be dated May, 1987. Creative teams will be Keith Giffen, Kevin Maguire and Terry Austin on the League and John Ostrander, Luke McDonnell and Karl Kesel on the Squad.

LETTERS

Send all comments and correspondence to:
COMICS FEATURE
8399 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Suite 210
Canoga Park, CA 91304

Dear Hal,

This is a letter of protest. Not toward you or **COMICS FEATURE**, you both are doing a great job and I look forward to CF every month. It is a protest of Marvel and DC and their direct sales policies.

The problem, at least for me, started when DC introduced two very exciting super teams, The Omega Men and Infinity Inc., and then made them direct sales only. That made me mad because I did not live near a comic shop. Well, I finally got over that and then they decided to make the Legion and Titans direct sales only—and then wait a year to reprint them.

Now think about it. It really isn't fair for only a select few to be up to date with a book while the rest of us are a year behind. Not only that, but because of the year delay, we "non-privliged ones" find out things in advance to the reprint that literally ruin the stories for us!

Here are some examples of things that I found out ahead of the reprint issue in which the incident takes place:

- Karate Kid's death—in letters page of **Tales of the Legion**
- Five new members of Legion—in **Crisis** and **Who's Who**
- Sensor Girl's identity—in **Who's Who**
- Kole's death—killed in **Crisis** before appearance in **Tales**
- Lilith's fate—from a friend

And believe me, there are *loads* more!

The other problem with direct sales books is that sometimes they tie in with a newsstand book. DC has already done this a number of times and will probably do it again in the future. And now so has Marvel.

I am referring to the Marauders/Morlocks storyline. Power Pack is involved and their book is direct sales only.

I think that the only reason that they had Power Pack involved is not because they are friends of the Morlocks, New Mutants and X-Men but because they want to get good sales for **Power Pack** so that they will not have to cancel it.

When a book goes from monthly to bi-monthly that tells me that it is not selling well and is on the verge of being cancelled. Look at **Dazzler** and **Wonder Woman** for examples.

I really wish that something could be done.

Marvel and DC try to rationalize everything by saying that we should go to comic shops to get the books. They insist that direct sales crossovers force people into the thousands of comics shops around the country and that it is not difficult to find one if you try. But that's just not true.

Let's analyze it. They say it forces people into comic shops. But people who have a comic book store near them would already get their books there and not need to be forced. Their claim that they want to force people into shops in order to expose them to other books is also laughable. Why expose people to the competition and possibly lose them? Also it is hard enough to afford the books at a newsstand let alone buying more that are twice as expensive!

Second they claim that there are just thousands of shops and everyone lives near one. Well, the nearest one to me is two counties away! Certainly too far to drive every week.

Something must be done. They could at least make the crossover issues available to everyone. I hate missing part of a story or having to wait and order them mail order. They get pretty expensive that way and you have to meet a minimum order.

Please print my letter in whole or in part along with my address. I want to hear from others to learn if they have any ideas.

I don't think that I could give up Marvel or DC as they are my release from the real world and I would probably go crazy without them, but who knows, they may just push me too hard one day, and that's it.

Thank you for listening. I am sorry that my letter is so long but once I got started it was hard to stop.

Your loyal reader,
Derrick Fannin
HCR 70 Box 365
Van Lear, KY 41265

Derrick—I don't usually print letters as long as this one intact, but it seemed that you had something special to say. Your letter very poignantly helps explain why I am so often at odds with the comic book companies, the professionals in the industry and even many of the magazine's other readers when they are so thrilled to see yet another direct project or are anxious to see this magazine devote more space to direct sales only comic books. While we are now running four pages of coverage after undergoing much soul searching, our main thrust will always be on the books that are available to all, both those presently being printed and those we remember fondly from the past. Too many people forget that many, many comic book fans never set foot in a comic book specialty store—over 80% of our readers purchase this magazine outside of a comic book

shop—and that it is outside of a comic book store that most new readers are recruited. In the past, when many of us started, there were no comic book stores. I have been very involved with the specialty market in the past—as both a distributor and a retailer—and I certainly realize the valuable role that comic book stores and distributors fulfill, but there is a much larger world outside of organized fandom! If only Marvel and DC don't lose sight of this.—Hopeful Hal

Dear Hal,

I am writing to share a few ideas with you, here's hoping you like them. In Animated Antics, could you do an article on **Captain Harlock**, one of the most popular animated tv shows from Japan? Harlock's popularity rivals (in my opinion) that of the X-Men, and that's saying a lot.

I've a suggestion to make. I'm sure many of your readers (myself included) have created many a comic book character type of their own, for their own comics or for DC or Marvel. I would suggest a column showcasing character ideas from readers. Readers can send in characters that they've created (somewhat like DC's **Dial H for Hero**). For a bit of variety, why not cover Comico's **Robotech** comics?

Let me know what you think.
Rodolfo Gonzalez
7610 16th St.
Miami, FL 33155

Rodolfo—A letter from sunny Florida, my old stomping grounds, that has some interesting ideas to boot! I'm passing on the suggestion on the good captain to our animation columnist but the make-your-own-heroes concept is something I can immediately act on. It sounds like fun. I am going to take a spot on the letters page for a semi-regular feature showcasing a sketch of a reader-created character along with a brief description of background and powers. (With all of the things that we have been adding to the letters page we might have to go from 2 to 3 or even 4 eventually, but it should be worth it!) So send in your characters and a brief—I mean brief!—description of what their powers are, how they got that way and a little bit about yourself. We'll run the most interesting ones and award a free subscription to the proud creators of the ones we select—that's a whole nine issues of great fun, interesting columns and fantastic features! Send them to Do-It-Yourself Heroes care of the address at the top of this page. And thanks for the idea Rodolfo!—Generous Hal

Yo! Hal,

My first copy of **COMICS FEATURE** that I bought was the May issue. I was reading your letters column and I noticed that several people have complained about not enough coverage on DC Comics. Well, let's face it people, there are only two great comics producers and they are: 1) Marvel and 2) the Japanese.

Speaking of Japanese comics, I would like an article on the real comics and cartoons.

I am anxiously looking for a source for the authentic Japanese comic books as they are impossible to locate here in Arizona.
Jonathan Leasor
260 W. 8th Ave. No. 103
Mesa, AZ 85202

Jonathan—I am going to try to revive an old tradition in comic book fandom to help you out. In the early fanzines of a couple of decades ago—that's the second time I've mentioned first fandom in this column, boy am I feeling old!—it was common practice for pleas such as this one to appear in print and for readers who had the appropriate information to contact the individual in distress at the printed address with the needed information. In those days, it was much harder to find material relating to comic books and the practice was a necessity. Now things are generally better, but there are still problems. Happy Hal personally requests that every one of you who can help contact Jonathan. He really cares. And one other thing emerged from the early practice, many firm friendships, some of which remain strong decades later!

Dear CF,

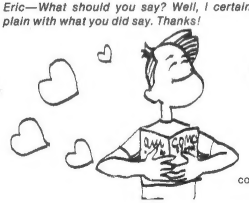
I would like to say your mag is really on it. I guess you'd call me a new reader, but I used to get your mag awhile back, but it was either hard to find or somebody kept buying them all. I just moved from Hawaii. I just sent my subscription in so that I won't miss an issue.

It is pretty sad to see Robert Lewis go (he'll be missed) but the mag hasn't missed a beat. Jim Keegan and Ruth Kennedy are doing an excellent job.

Mike Benton is doing a great job. His column is interesting and informative (I'm looking for his book). Ron Goulart, James Van Hise, Will Murray, Roy Thomas and the whole crew are terrific.

Last, but not least, is you, Happy Hal. What can I say—you're the best!
Aloha,
Eric Hamilton
Oceanside, CA

Eric—What should you say? Well, I certainly can't complain with what you did say. Thanks!



Comics Consumer Guide

DC COMICS

11/4/86 Shipping Group

☐ **MASK #1—**
(Fleisher/Swan/Schaffenberger) Toy tie-in.

11/11/86 Shipping Group

☐ **ANGEL LOVE #8—**
(Last issue) (Barbara Slate) The truth about sis!

☐ **DEMON #3—**
(of 4) (Wagner/Nichols inks)

☐ **FURY OF FIRESTORM #57—**
(Randall/Delbo/Mitchell)

☐ **HISTORY OF DC UNIVERSE PORTFOLIO—**

☐ **IRONWOLF #1—**
(one-shot) (Chaykin/O'Neil) Reprint, direct sales only.

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE #260—**
(LEGENDS crossover) (De Matteis/McDonnell)

☐ **OUTSIDERS #17—**
(Barr/Aparo) Batman and Outsiders vs Eclipso.

☐ **TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #75—**
(Wolfman/Patton-Tanghal, Giordano) Reprints TITANS #16.

☐ **VIGILANTE #39—**
(Kupperberg/Smith-Magyar) White slavery, cover blurb: For Mature Readers Only. Direct sales only.

☐ **WATCHMEN #7—**
(of 12) (Moore/Gibbons) Direct sales only.

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #2—**
(Perez-Potter/Perez-Patterson) Diana's quest for Ares begins.

☐ **BATMAN #3—**
(Part 2 of 4 of BATMAN: YEAR ONE) (Miller/Mazzuchelli) Batman vs Gotham police.

☐ **BLUE BEETLE #10—**
(LEGENDS crossover) (Wein/Cullins/Barras) Concluding LEGENDS crossovers.

☐ **ELECTRIC WARRIOR #11—**
(Moench/Balkie/Marcos) Direct sales only

☐ **G. I. COMBAT #288—**
(Kanigher/Glanzman)

11/18/86 Shipping Group

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #32—**
(Levitz/LaRocque/DeCarlo) First of four parts. Direct sales only.

☐ **SECRET ORIGINS #12—**
(Evanier/Patton&Thomas/Grindberg/DeZuniga) Challengers of the Unknown and Golden Age Fury.

☐ **STAR TREK #36—**
(STAR TREK IV crossover) (Wein/Morrow)

☐ **SUPERMAN #3—**
(LEGENDS crossover) (Byrne/Austin) Superman goes to Apokolips.

11/25/86 Shipping Group

☐ **ADVENTURES OF THE OUTSIDERS #43—**
(Barr/Aparo.Von Eeden) Reprints OUTSIDERS #5.

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #426—**
(LEGENDS crossover) (Byrne/Wolfman/Ordway/Machlan) Last hope of the hunger dogs.

☐ **BOOSTER GOLD #14—**
(Jurgens/DeCarlo) Guest stars Rip Hunter.

☐ **ELVIRA'S HAUNTED HOLIDAYS #1—**
(Calvalleri/Fleisher/Etc.)

☐ **GREEN LANTERN CORPS #210—**
(Englehart/Staton/Farmer)

☐ **INFINITY INC. #36—**
(Thomas/McFarlane/DeZuniga) Showdown between Infinitors vs Injustice Unlimited vs The Global Guardians. Direct sales only.

☐ **THE NEW TEEN TITANS #29—**
(Wolfman/Barreto/Tanghal) Direct sales only.

☐ **SWAMP THING #58—**
(Moore/Veitch/Alcala) Adam Strange guests.

☐ **WARLORD #115—**
(Fleisher/Randall) LEGENDS tie-in

☐ **WHO'S WHO #25—**

12/2/86 Shipping Group

☐ **ACTION #586—**
(Byrne/Giordano) Enter the New Gods. LEGENDS tie-in.

☐ **ALL-STAR SQUADRON #67—**
(Thomas/Jones/DeZuniga) Last issue.

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #1—**
(Bates/Broderick/Smith) 40-page premiere.

☐ **COSMIC BOY #4—**
(Levitz/Giffen/Colon/Smith) LEGENDS tie-in.

☐ **DETECTIVE #572—**
(Barr/Davis/Neary/others) Batman & Sherlock Holmes in 50th anniversary.

☐ **HAWKMAN #8—**
(Isabella/Howell/Garzon)

☐ **LEGENDS #5—**
(of 6) (Ostrander/Wein/Byrne/Kesel) Dr. Fate, Superman, Capt. Marvel, Flash, Suicide Squad, Changeling, Darkseid.

☐ **MASK #2—**
(Fleisher/Swan/Schaffenberger)

☐ **QUESTION #2—**
(O'Neil/Cowan/Magyar) Direct sales only.

☐ **TALES OF THE LEGION #345—**
(Levitz/LaRocque/Mahlstedt) Reprints LSH #20.

☐ **TEEN TITANS SPOTLIGHT #8—**
(Baron/Guice/Mahlstedt) Hawk solo.

☐ **WHO'S WHO IN STAR TREK #1—**

12/9/86 Shipping Group

☐ **THE MAGIC GOES AWAY GRAPHIC NOVEL #6—**
(Larry Niven/Kupperberg/Duursema)

☐ **STAR TREK IV MOVIE SPECIAL—**

MARVEL COMICS

11/4/86 Shipping Group

☐ **DAREDEVIL #240—**
(Nocenti/Williams/Williamson) Origin Rotgut.

☐ **NEW MUTANTS #49—**
(Claremont/Blevins) Continuing Back to Future storyline in a future where mutants rule all.

☐ **NIGHT MASK #5—**
(Bates/Colon)

☐ **PSI FORCE #5—**
(Fingeroth/Texeira/Barta)

☐ **STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #4—**
(Gillis/Anderson/Williams) Death of first volunteer. Horde appears.

☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #24—**
(Michelinie/Fern/Colletta) Return of Slyde.

☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #18—**
(Englehart/Milgrom/Sinnott) **Guest-starring Two-Gun Kid, Rawhide Kid and Phantom Horseman (?). WCA in the Wild West!**

☐ **COMET MAN #2—**
(of 6) (Bill Mumy & Miguel Ferrar/Jones/Talaoc) Government causes death of Comet Man's wife beginning CM vs. Government storyline. A must for all Lost In Space fans.

☐ **CLOAK & DAGGER #11—**
(Last Issue) (Mantlo/Brigman plus Stroman/Austin & Emberlin) Two stories in oversized issue.

☐ **CONAN THE KING #39—**
(Kraar/Hunt/Nichols)

☐ **G.I. JOE YEARBOOK #3—**
(Hama/Wagner/Demulder) Annual recap.

11/11/86 Shipping Group

☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #44—**
(Mantlo/Ross/Portacio) Snowbird and Thompson die; Purple Girl appears.

☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #286—**
(MacDonald/MaGuire/Colletta) Conclusion Gang War storyline. Gueststars:Hobgoblin, Jack O'Lantern, Silver Sable, Rose and DD.

☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #327—**
(Gruenwald/Neary/Beatty) Cap vs. Superpatriot.

☐ **G.I. JOE VS TRANSFORMERS #3—**
(of 4) (Higgins/Trimpe/Colletta) Cobra & Decepticons allied.

☐ **KICKERS INC #5—**
(DeFalco & Gruenwald/Frenz/Breeding) Crossover with DP 7.

☐ **MERC #5—**
(Kanigher/Chan)

☐ **G.I. JOE ORDER OF BATTLE #4—**

☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR VS THE X-MEN #2—**
(of 4) (Claremont/Bagdanove/Austin)

☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #133—**

☐ **SPIDER-MAN DIGEST #32—**
Reprints #54,55 and 56.

☐ **X-MEN INDEX #1—**

11/18/86 Shipping Group

☐ **MARVEL AGE #48—**

☐ **AVENGERS #277—**
(Stern/J. Buscema/Palmer) End of Masters of Evil leads to Hercules and Wasp being replaced by Thor, She-Hulk and Dr. Druid.

☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #192—**
(Owsley/Semelks/Isherwood)

☐ **D.P. 7 #5—**
(Gruenwald/Ryan/Tanghal)

☐ **G.I. JOE #57—**
(Hama/Wagner/DeMulder) Destro appears.

☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #329—**

☐ **JUSTICE #5—**
(Englehart/Isherwood/Colletta)

☐ **MARVEL TALES #197—**
Reprints TEAM-UP #63.

☐ **THE 'NAM #4—**
(Murray/Golden/Gil) Trapped behind enemy lines with a tv crew.

☐ **X-MEN #215—**
(Claremont/Davis/Green) Return of Madelyne Pryor, bereft of memory and child. Intro of Stonewall, Super Sabre and Crimson Commando.

☐ **MARVEL SAGA #16—**

☐ **TRANSFORMERS UNIVERSE #4—**

☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #—**
(DeMatteis/Gammill/Janke) Cap vs Yellow Claw in first of 2-parts. Direct sales only.

11/25/86 Shipping Group

☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #300—**
(Stern/J. Buscema/S. Buscema) Johnny and Alicia get married. Plus Puppet Master and Wizard.

☐ **IRON MAN #216—**
(Michelinie/Bright/Layton) Death of Clytemnestra in battle with A.I.M..

☐ **PETER PARKER #124—**
(David/Baker/McLeod) Cameo appearances by Dakota North, DD and Silver Sable.

☐ **SPITFIRE ☐—**
(Conway/Trimpe) Trial continues.

☐ **STAR BRAND ☐—**
(Shooter/Romita Jr.) Lost in space.

☐ **THOR #377—**
(Simonson/S. Buscema) Thor dons armour plus plague hits Asgard as prelude to war.

☐ **TRANSFORMERS #26—**
(Budiansky/Perlin/Akin & Garvey) Vs. Mechanic.

☐ **X-FACTOR #14—**
(L. Simonson/W. Simonson) Master Mold.

☐ **CLASSIC X-MEN ●—**

☐ **SAVAGE TALES #9—**

☐ **TRANSFORMERS DIGEST #2—**
Reprints #4, 5 and 6.

☐ **MARVEL UNIVERSE TRADE PAPERBACK #2—**

BY JAMES VAN HISE

HEROES

THE NEW MUTANTS™

MIRAGE CONFRONTS THE GHOST BEAR!

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If the new X-Men were created to be an international team, the New Mutants followed this line even more closely to become a group with truly cosmopolitan flavor. Created in 1982, the **New Mutants** can be seen as the turning point where Marvel consciously set out to create a very aggressively active mutant universe within the larger boundaries of the Marvel Universe.

Marvel Graphic Novel No. 4 introduces the New Mutants in a sequence reminiscent of the section of **Giant Size X-Men** No. 1 wherein Prof. X finds the new X-Men one by one as their mutant abilities reveal them to a hostile human populace of their respective homelands.

The origin story, "Renewal," opens in Scotland where Moira MacTaggert (a friend to the X-Men, as revealed in past adventures) encounters 14 year old Rahne Sinclair, who has just manifested her mutant shape-changing ability before the angry eyes of Reverend Craig and his followers. Moira orders them off her land and rescues Rahne, deciding on the spot that only one person can help her — Prof. X!

In Rio De Janiero, Roberto da Costa is in the midst of an important soccer match when his strange power manifests itself. As a result he is targeted for kidnapping.

Another mutant, age 16, is Sam Guthrie, a coal miner's son who reveals his bizarre power when he rescues his boss during a deadly cave-in. Prof. X doesn't learn of this incident but instead young Sam is recruited, through deception, into The Hellfire Club.

In the Medicine Bow Mountains near Sudance, Colorado, the young Indian maiden, Danielle Moonstar, has also begun manifesting mutant powers, although hers are far

more arcane and magical in nature. Her grandfather, Black Eagle, reveals that he has contacted an old friend, Charles Xavier, to help her best use her newly formed powers. These powers forsee her grandfather's death — an event brought about by a renegade member of The Hellfire Club bent on taking over the organization.

At Prof. Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, Moira MacTaggert is there with Rahne and Prof. X is testing a young Vietnamese girl, Xi'an Coy Mahn. Her code name is Karma. She can possess a person's mind.

Along with his new pupils, Prof. X travels to Colorado in response to Black Eagle's summons. There they find the old Indian dead and Danielle under attack by men in battle armor. They are foiled by Karma, although in the battle, Danielle's pet mountain lion, Ridge-Runner, is killed.

In South America, another death occurs when Roberto's friend, Juliana, uses her body to protect her friend. She succeeds, but at the sacrifice of her own life. The men they're up against are cyborgs whose bodies were reconstructed after a vicious encounter once with the X-Men's Wolverine. Danielle uses this fact against them with the illusions she creates.

Ultimately the group confronts and defeats Donald Pierce, leaving him to be dealt with by the ones he betrayed— the Hellfire Club.

Sam Guthrie realizes how he had been duped and two weeks later arrives at the mansion at Prof. X's invitation and is finally accepted by the other members of the New Mutants.

NOT ANOTHER X-MEN

In the first issue of **The New Mutants**, the story occurs at a time when the X-Men are missing and Prof. X has done some serious soul-searching regarding the wisdom of having a fighting team. When Roberto asks if they are to become the new X-Men (a logical question since they have all been given uniforms identical with those originally worn by the X-Men years before), Prof. X has a curt reply. "There will be a School for Gifted Youngsters — whose students are mutants — but never again will there be the X-Men, a team of mutant super heroes. That chapter of my life is ended forever."

But even though Prof. X was totally opposed to the youngsters becoming a fighting team, fate would take the choice out of his hands.

In issue 2, the team encounters the new Sentinels, a team built under a government contract issued to Sebastian Shaw of The Hellfire Club. Surprisingly, The New Mutants defeat the monstrous robots seemingly with greater ease than the X-Men have in the past when they confronted the mutant-hunting monstrosities.

In issue 3, the alien Brood queen that's possessing Prof. X attacks the students, but they manage to drive it off. This story reaches its conclusion in **X-Men** 167 when the Brood is finally defeated. It then becomes apparent to Xavier that he had formed The New Mutants under the control of the

Brood Queen as she was searching for genetically superior humans in which to implant her embryos.

"Who's Scaring Stevie?" in Issue 4 is an unusual story and is far more effective for that reason. No super-villains here. No mutant hunters or threat from The Hell Fire Club, but just a threatening phone caller to a friend of the New Mutants, a caller who is revealed to be a boy their own age who is suffering from abuse at the hands of his parents. That abuse has warped him, but in the end he may have been found out in time.

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The meticulous pencils (along with the finished art) of Bob Wiatland.

In issue 6, the climax features an explosion in which Karma is apparently killed — but it takes place offstage. The cliffhanger has Prof. X losing mental contact with the New Mutants when an explosion is set off in the structure the group is in. Prof. X says that he has to get to California as quickly as possible for he fears that something terrible has happened. But issue 7 opens up with the aftermath, as the group feels dejected over the loss of Shan. How exactly did they lose her? One has the feeling that an issue was missed and it's only a couple issues later that Roberto has a flashback to Shan slipping from his hand and falling off a cliff into the sea — a scene no reader had seen before even though it involved the death of an original member of the team. But even though Shan is gone, she somehow turns up on the masthead of issues 8 and 9.

Issues 8-11 deal with an adventure in a lost city in South America. The odd part is it's peopled with descendants of Roman legionaires—in South America? The protracted story introduces a new young mutant, Magma, in issue 10. She joins Xavier's school in issue 13. Amara can absorb energy from the sun and transform it into power capable of manipulating tectonic forces. In other words she can cause earthquakes.

Illyana Rasputin, (the younger sister of Colossus) turns up in issue 14, fresh from her **Magik** mini-series, where she gained the powers of a demon sorceress. She too becomes one of the New Mutants, although the lines start getting pretty blurred when magic is regarded as a mutant power.

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A NEW MUTANT LOOK

Readers got a screaming eyefull of the new artist on the title when Bill Sienkiewicz took over with issue 18. His powerful, often impressionistic approach to the rendering of the super hero gave the book an exciting new look. Even writer Chris Claremont seemed enervated by his new collaborator as the storylines began taking strange directions tailormade for Bill's highly individualistic style of art.

Issues 18-20 feature the "Demon Bear" saga, a rare and powerful story dealing with the bear that has haunted Danielle Moonstar's dreams since before she joined the New Mutants. Now the time comes for her to face this demonic creature — it almost costs her her life. This story is conceived and executed on the level of a graphic novel as it is excellent in both art and scripting. Claremont reveals a grasp for fantasy that far exceeds even his mastery of the super-hero style of storytelling. He explores the abstract nature of magic while Bill Sienkiewicz renders it with such arresting images that one can't help but be drawn deeper and deeper into the horrific world it portrays.

A subplot in that story leads to the introduction of Warlock (no connection with the late Adam Warlock), an alien who becomes the next, and strangest, member of the New Mutants. He's a shape-changer but the real nature of his being is rather difficult to get a handle on. Weird describes him pretty well. Damn weird. He looks somewhat like an explosion in the shape of a human body and only a couple artists, such as Art Adams, have been able to capture his essence as well as Sienkiewicz does. His unveiling on page 16 of issue 21 is pretty startling and it takes a few issues for the eye to get used to scanning his image just because it's so — alien. Truly alien.

Warlock is fleeing from his father, Magus, and the New Mutants drive the elder off, this time, and welcome the alien into their midst.

Since **The New Mutants** is written by the same author as **The X-Men**, Chris Claremont explores parallel storylines and has characters affecting both titles. The Hellfire Club is primary among these as we see changes developing there as well as the introduction of Selene, who would come to figure prominently in **X-Men** encounters.

Another example of this is that the aftermath of Magneto's near fatal encounter with the X-Men (in issue 150) is seen briefly in **New Mutants** 23.

THE ROSTER

The ranks of The New Mutants have swelled to nine members now, including Karma who was revealed to be alive in issue 31. Horribly deformed, she regained her true form mystically in **The New Mutants Special Edition No. 1** (1985).

Karma: Real name Xi'an Coy Manh, she can possess the mind of another person and control their body.

Wolfsbane: Rahne Sinclair, she is a shapechanger who can turn into a wolf or into a combination of a wolf and a girl.

Mirage: Danielle Moonstar first went by the code name Psyche became telepathic and can project a person's innermost thoughts and fears in the form of 3-D hallucinations.

Sunspot: Roberto Da Costa can absorb the energy of the sun and then release it as superhuman strength, the action causing his body and clothing to turn black in the process.

Cannonball: Can transform himself into a human battering ram who is largely invulnerable when using his power. Real name Sam Guthrie.

Magma: Amara Aquilla can tap into the tectonic forces of the earth, transforming her body into that of some volcanic entity.

Magik: Illyana Rasputin is the sister of Peter Rasputin (Colossus of The X-Men) who was held prisoner in another dimension where she became a master of demonic magic.

Warlock: An alien shapechanger who can literally change into anything. He is still learning how to fit in to human society on earth.

Cypher: Doug Ramsey is the newest member, whose ability is to instantly be able to decipher all codes and languages. He has an inferiority complex because his power is not action-oriented the way that the abilities of the others are.

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NEW MUTANTS, OLD MUTANTS

Issue 32 deals with the surprising discovery of Karma, albeit in a virtually unrecognizeable form. In the recap of the events which transpired when she vanished, and was presumably killed, yet another version of the incident is told in which Sunspot falls into the sea with her and only then loses his grip on her.

Finally in issue 34 it's revealed that Karma had been controlled by the astral form of Amahl Farouk, an evil mutant once defeated by Prof. X years before in Cairo. When he finally flees in defeat, Karma is left in a body huge and bloated by self-indulgence.

The New Mutants Special Edition No. 1 (which appeared in 1985 instead of an annual for that year) is actually a part of a larger story which deals with the X-Men and began in **X-Men/Alpha Flight** and concluded in **X-Men** annual **9**. The main events in the **Special Edition** stand on their own and the 64 page issue stands as the single finest New Mutants tale to date and one of the best comics published in the past decade. Once again Claremont demonstrates a feel for dark fantasy which exceeds even his acknowledged expertise in handling superhero material. This is coupled with powerful pencilling by Arthur Adams, inking by Terry Austin and sensitive coloration by Christie Scheele. Adams displays a feel for drawing Warlock that is unexcelled. On pages 6 & 7 we see Warlock exploring the nature of swimming suits, including copying the bikini which Illya is wearing.

The organic circuitry of Warlock is brilliantly realized by Adams, such as in panel one on page 54 where Warlock's pointing finger is screaming and his throat has an exclamation point on it! Warlock's shapechanging even includes him becoming a Gumby clone on page 63. The issue has so much going for it that each character is given their moment in the sun — even Cypher who finally learns what it's like to be in the midst of a powerful battle. Instead of just being a long story in a giant-size format, this truly is a "special edition."

When the New Mutants return to earth and home in issue 35, they find that some changes have been rung down in their midst. As seen in **X-Men**, Prof. X has left and asked the now-reformed Magneto to take charge of his school and lead the New Mutants, an aspect of the continuity whose repercussions are still being felt to this day. The issue also features a scene which shows Magneto confronting some less than noble humans who had attacked one of his students, and he demonstrates what he can do and how fortunate the miscreants are that he is not the person he once was. **CF**

JAMES VAN HISE is the former editor of one of the oldest fanzines in the comic book field, author of The Art of Al Williamson and editor of Monsterland.

Games

BY STEVE PERRIN

HEH, HEH... HIYA THERE KIDDIES. I THOUGHT I'D START OFF THIS MONTHS COLUMN WITH A REVIEW OF A NEW GAME CALLED CHALLENGERS
CHALLENGERS
ROLE PLAYING GAME
ILLUSTRATIONS JIM KEEGAN

CHALLENGERS

Ragnarok Enterprises has sat on the border between professional and amateur for years. Most of its key personnel are college students, and understandably concerned with other things than putting out a professional looking product. In fact, Dave Nalle and his cohorts pride themselves on putting out affordable games and supplements, and one is hard put to deny that the prices of Ragnarok Enterprises products are among the lowest in the industry.

At Origins, they were good enough to present me with a review copy of **Challengers**, their superhero role playing game. At $9.95 it is one of the cheapest superhero games around, surpassed in thrift only by the unboxed **Villains and Vigilantes** and **Supergame**. For your ten bucks you get a sturdy if small box containing one 24 page book and one 44 page book (**Supergame** gives you 40 pages in a book, **Villains and Vigilantes** gives you 48 pages.) The books are smaller (8½ by 7 rather than 8½ by 11) than the aforementioned game books but the type is also smaller and denser. It's photo-reduced typescript, rather than typeset. All in all, it seems like a good deal for the price.

Unfortunately, it only *looks* like it's worth the price. In an industry where standards are not always high, the artwork fails to meet industry standards. Certainly no one but the crudest comic book publisher would use this sort of work.

Reading the rules is a chore. The print is, as told, smaller and denser than usual, and the writing style is an annoying amalgam of dry and droll. Illustrations throughout the text are just drawings, they have nothing to do with the text.

Once you get into the actual game system, you find that the rules are written by people who expect the gamer to have a multi-function pocket calculator handy. Such simple things as movement and range are dealt with in squares and higher powers of numbers. When I sit down to play a game, I don't need to spend my time figuring out how to make my calculator go through its tricks. Maybe I'm not in touch with the modern realities, but it seems like a lot of work for no particular gain in authenticity or play enjoyment.

The powers list is as idiosyncratic as I expect such a list to be. It includes all the powers the playtesters thought were neat, and all the others the authors thought should be covered to make sure the really common comics characters can be duplicated in the game. I do have some questions, however. How do I do a Darkness-Based character (Shroud, Cloak, Dr. Midnight, Darkstar), Dave? Elemental Control doesn't deal with simply binding an opponent. How about a character who absorbs energy and deals it back out again later, like Sebastian Shaw of the Hellfire Club? How about someone who can live in space without a space suit, like any number of characters?

Now, I may be maligning Dave unfairly by asking these questions. I might have missed the description of these powers because my eyes gave out from looking at all the close-packed tall paragraphs of tiny print, or perhaps more likely, Dave has his own world setup, and didn't feel that the superheroes on this world would have these particular powers (unable to throw smoke bombs, Dave?)

You see, the best part of this package is that Dave shares the background of his world in the game. The 44-page book is subtitled "Background and Adventures" and that's all it is. The first 18 pages is a year-by-year timeline, starting with the currency crisis of 1989, that leads up to the period of this game, the year 2020. Like the first superhero game on the market, **Superhero 2044**, **Challengers** tries to correlate a superhero world to the real one by saying that all this superpowered stuff happened in the future. It's a valid concept, though I think it loses the immediacy of a current day superhero game, which reflects the worlds presented by Marvel and DC and their competition.

If Dave Nalle hadn't added the "Mutogenon Crisis" to his timeline, he would have a perfectly good future history to play a standard science fiction game in. In fact, since this

game is touted as an adjunct to **To Challenge Tomorrow**, Ragnarok's science fiction game, one wonders if its timeline and TCT's are about the same? Lamentably, I can't say, since I do not have a copy of TCT.

The Adventures which comprise the rest of the book are quite interesting. Players start as normal government agents but get trapped in a situation in which they receive the Mutogenon drug. They mutate into heroes. Then they must investigate a valley which might be polluted with toxic substances, such as Mutogenon (is it really contaminated? What do you think?). These two adventures serve as a good two-step introduction to the game. The remaining four adventures include another pair of linked adventures and two others which stand alone.

Each adventure occupies no more than two pages, leaving the description of characters for the remaining section of the book. They are succinctly described (all that small print helps) and look like they could be very intriguing and challenging. What's best about them is that despite their futuristic background, any of them could easily be run in a modern day campaign, making them useful for people who play other superhero games.

In general, I do not like **Challengers** as a game. It makes too much use of hand held calculators that are more powerful than mine (sorry, Dave, square roots is the best any of mine can do) and there are other unnecessary complexities in the character creation and combat systems. However, as an interesting bit of future speculation and source of some good scenarios, it is potentially useful. Whether it is worth $10.00 is something for you, the buyer, to decide.

To return to our topic of what is new in the gaming biz, I think **Challengers** shows just how *un*new games can be. The character creation system is similar to **Champions** and **Superworld** with only a slight random element to it. Many of the powers described are identical in use to those from the previous games, plus some from others. This can be justified since there are only so many powers in comic books and so many ways to describe them, but that leaves open the basic question. Why add another game when all the options are already covered?

Of course, players are continually changing the games they play in order to make them work "better" according to their lights. This is how I got my start in the business, and why Dave Nalle and his friends started Ragnarok Enterprises. Somewhere in **Challengers** and the other games published by Ragnarok there are one or two things which struck Dave and his friends as absolutely necessary in a game. Things that no one seemed to have provided in any game already on the market. So, they stepped forward to supply it. As with so many other, similar, efforts they then tacked on whatever rules came to mind to flesh out the game and make it complete.

However, his "bylaws" don't solve the problems I see in the other games in the genre, so I don't think it's worth the effort. But that's what makes horse races — and game sales.

WELL KIDDIES, MAYBE THAT LAST GAME WAS A STINKER. BUT DON'T WORRY, I COOKED UP A REVIEW FOR A NEW GAME CALLED 'JORUNE' ON THE NEXT PAGE. YOU'LL KILL FOR IT.

JORUNE

First there was **Dungeons and Dragons**, then there was **Tunnels and Trolls**, then there was **Chivalry and Sorcery**, then there was **RuneQuest** — and finally a departure from "Erg and Arg" titles — and then there were many more of the fantasy roleplaying games. Each attempted to meet the needs of the public and each tried to be a bit different from its predecessors. The game press was full of discussions of "second generation" and "third generation" games. Most of these later efforts are gone now; either victims of their own mediocrity or bad merchandising.

However, there are still people out there who play a few D&D or **RuneQuest** games and feel that it is *almost* what they want, but not quite, so it's time to publish a new one.

Some of these brash would-be publishers run off a hundred copies at a local print shop and show up at a convention to try to sell them — and sometimes they succeed in moving their print run. Others set out to do a quality job and try to break into real publishing with a good-looking product with real sales value. Such a product is **SkyRealms of Jorune**, a boxed roleplaying game set in a fantasy milieu with a science fictional base.

Like many roleplaying products these days (including the **Challengers** game just reviewed), **Jorune** is set in a specific world. In fact, the world is one of the main attractions of the game. Many hundreds of years before the time of the game, Terran colonists landed on the planet Jorune, grabbing large chunks of it away from the pacifistic natives. Somewhat later, Terra broke contact and the so-far-pacifistic natives decided to demonstrate their dislike of their unwanted guests by unleashing the magical powers that the humans refused to believe they possessed. After major cataclysms destroyed most Terran artifacts, the remaining humans are left to try to live with all the alien creatures inhabiting the planet.

Another main attraction of the game is the rich variety of creatures involved. Somewhere early in the history of the post-cataclysmic humans, a biologist decided to take several Earth species and mutate them into sentience — so the humans have to deal with intelligent wolves, bears, cats and all the usual sort. But there are numerous interesting and destructive creatures already on the planet, both intelligent and not. There even seem to be a whole subset of creatures who also came from another planet — many centuries before the Earthfolk.

I don't know if you could call the package a pretty one. Artist Miles Teves has a good hand for drawing aliens — perhaps too good. The cover of the **Jorune** box is a well done painting showing two humans and two very authentic looking but very ugly aliens. Teves is an excellent artist. His anatomy is good and his poses throughout his work for the project are excellent. He eschews the usual pointless action scenes of man-fighting-monster for pictures of the various species in characteristic everyday poses. Perhaps because Teves does not have a comic book approach to his work, it doesn't carry as well to the cartoon-minded gamer — like me.

Getting into the world, however, starts presenting one with a case of DEJA VU. The ancient natives (the Sthantha) are almost immortal seers with great magical (magic works on this planet) ability. Does this sound like the standard version of elves? I thought it might.

More aliens begin to take on the trappings of dwarves, hobbits, trolls, orcs, etc. I suppose that one could assume that a fantasy world has certain niches in its sentience eco-system, and species naturally adapt to fill those niches. But I keep feeling that all these aliens are just races out of Tolkien with different names and (in some cases) a few extra limbs. Still, all these cliches show up in a lot of places besides Tolkien and his direct imitators, and a fantasy game is supposed to duplicate in the player the feeling he has from reading a fantasy novel.

Where I can complain, however, is in how **Jorune** works as a game. Here it falls down a bit. The skill system is simplicity itself and quite excellent. I know this because it effectively mirrors systems from **RuneQuest** and my other games. However, in combat they have departed radically from their model. Here we have another group of gamers who have developed a complex combat system which attempts to cover every possible maneuver by adding and subtracting series of numbers to the chance of hitting — trying to account for every little nuance of combat. Mostly this tends to drag a combat round out about three times longer than it needs to be.

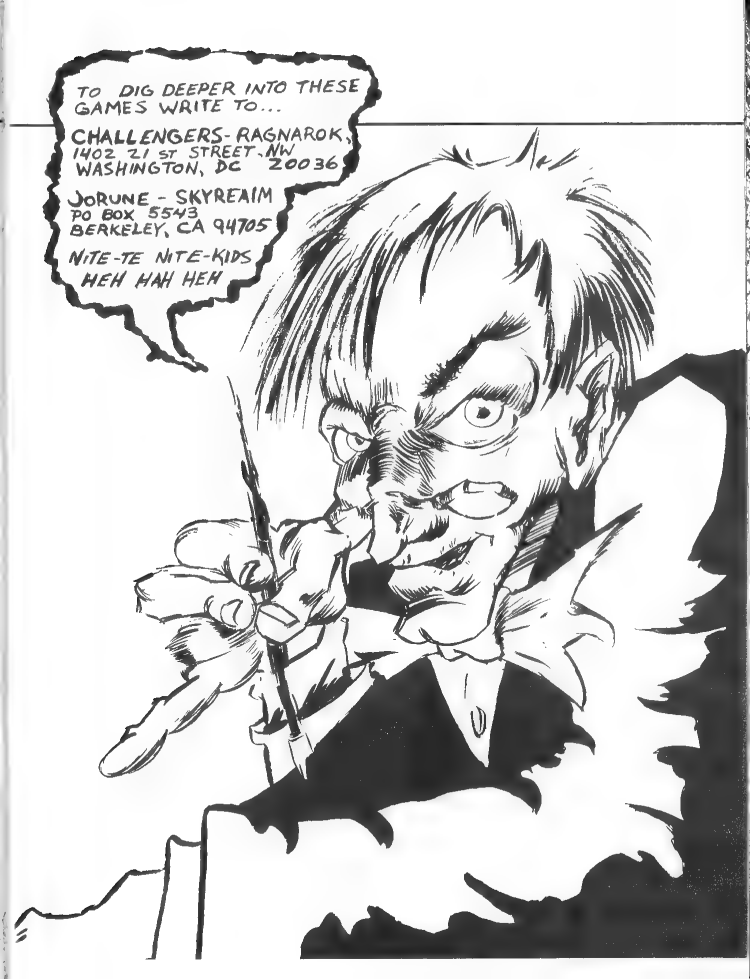
Is the resulting combat authentic? Sure. Is it exciting. Maybe for just two players who are fighting each other. If you get six players fighting a bunch of "Scholarl" (the **Jorune** name for Gamemaster-run monsters), one little combat is going to take all night. The example combat they give takes six rounds to settle one fight between two people...Too much authenticity and too little game.

This sounds strange coming from the man whose chief claim to fame is a series of games with an "authentic" combat system. However, my basic premise was always to keep the game fun as well as authentic, and I seem to have succeeded. I'm sure the masterminds behind SkyRealm Publishing have a lot of fun with their game, too, but I don't know if it will catch the market of fantasy gamers they are looking for.

It's a good world, though, with a lot of promise. I'll be fascinated to see if they can keep up the highly professional design work they are doing on it.

DF

STEVE PERRIN is the creator of the Elfquest, RuneQuest and Superworld games along with scores of modules and other related material.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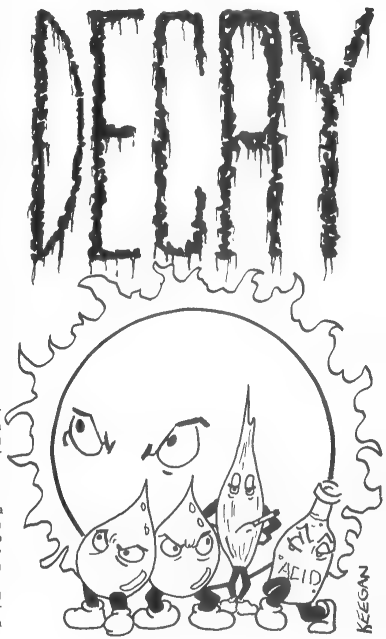


There are only two things you have to do to be a comic book collector: (1) Buy comics; (2) Store comics.

You don't even have to read them, but you do have to find a way to store books as you accumulate your collection.

Comic books, like all collectibles, require a certain amount of care and feeding. That's what makes old comics valuable in the first place — the fact that only a few were carefully stored and preserved while the majority succumbed to summer heat, autumn rains and spring cleaning.

Unlike other paper collectibles, comics are often handled and read by their owners so their storage is more tricky than say postage stamps or baseball cards.

To help you decide the best way to store your comic collection, let's look at what you have to protect them from:

HEAT—The quickest way to age a comic book is to put it in a hot place, like an attic or garage. High temperatures yellow and brittle a comic book.

In fact, if you could drop the temperature low enough where you kept your comics, you could make them last a thousand years! Like beer on a summer day, the colder the better when you store comics.

For most collectors, this will mean storing comics in places where there is not a wide fluctuation in temperature or perhaps keeping them in an air-conditioned room year round.

WATER—Although heat kills comics, water and moisture have probably taken a greater toll on comic book collections.

Excessive moisture and humidity accelerates paper decay. Ideally, your comics should be kept at 40 percent humidity or below. A simple solution is to pack bags of desiccants around your collection to absorb moisture.

Although high humidity kills comics, more collections have been destroyed through floods, leaky roofs and burst water pipes.

One of my friends stored his comics in the closet with the hot water heater. The water heater exploded, and...

The smartest thing you can do is to ALWAYS have your comics off the floor. Never set boxes of comic books on a floor where there is danger of water leaks, rains or rising water. Always put at least a one or two inch board under your comic boxes if you have them sitting on the floor.

LIGHT—Sunlight and especially flourescent light ages comics quickly. Keep your collection in the dark.

AIR—Oxygen aids in the oxidation of the paper fibers in a comic book. Ideally, comics would be stored in a vacuum vault. Another solution for extremely valuable books is to encapsulate them in an oxygen-free environment by sealing them in Mylar bags that have been filled with nitrogen.

Some collectors make the mistake, however, of placing their collections in an air-tight storage area like an old or used freezer or refrigerator. The damage here is that in a

closed-circulation environment where oxygen still remains, the books are trapped in sulfuric vapors that emit from their own decaying paper.

ACID — By now many collectors are aware that comics are made from paper that contains acid fibers which slowly destroy the book. Did you know, however, that your own hands and finger tips have acids that attack comic paper?

Just handling a comic hastens its demise, but don't be afraid to read them! Just handle with care, and make sure that your fingers are as clean as possible when handling your collection.

So the ideal storage conditions for comic books are as follows: (1) Absolute zero cold; (2) Total darkness; (3) Moisture free; (4) In an oxygen free vacuum; and (5) Free from human touch.

I think the only storage area that satisfies all these requirements is an underground vault on the dark side of the Moon.

Seriously, you'll never be able to store your comics under IDEAL conditions. But now you know what your comics do like: a cool, dark and dry spot that's isolated from the ravages of time, humanity and insects.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In the last three years, there has been a trend to collecting comics which have been personally signed or autographed by the artist who drew the book.

At every convention, there is always a line of fans (and dealers!) with stacks of comics for the guest artists to sign.

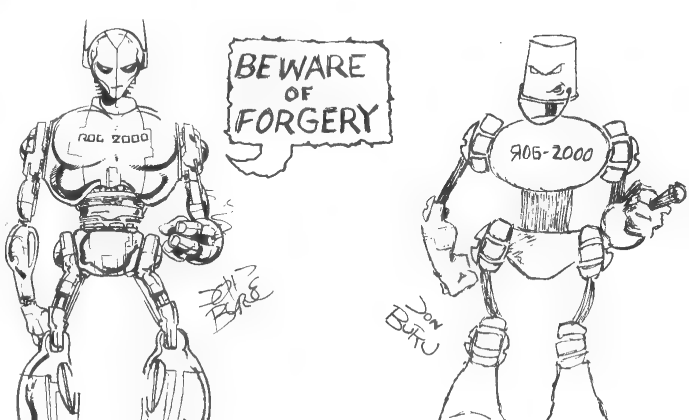
Are autographed comics worth a lot more? Are they true collector's items?

Signed comics follow in the giant footsteps of the autographed first editions that are so eagerly sought after by science-fiction and rare book collectors.

First, I think the real value of an autographed comic is purely personal. It is a real thrill to meet the person who drew a comic you enjoyed and to have them sign it for you on the spot. It's a great and unique souvenir of a convention visit.

But — does a signature make your comic more valuable, and should you pay more for a signed comic?

First, the value of a signature depends entirely upon the artist. Someone who is a regular and popular convention



guest, like John Byrne, will sign thousands of comics.

On the other hand, my most prized signed comic is a Little Lulu annual autographed by John Stanley who wrote the series since its beginning. Stanley almost never attends conventions or responds to fans' requests for autographs. Hence, his name is rare on a comic.

Of course the most highly desired signed comics are those by artists who are no longer living. Wally Wood, for example, will never sign another comic, and any with his signatures are truly limited collector's items.

If you have a comic signed strictly for investment purposes, you should follow these rules:

First, have the artist sign ONLY his name. No personal inscriptions, such as "To Sam Slick — A Great Fan." Collectors who may later buy your signed comic don't want your name written on it.

Second, have the artist sign it in ink NOT pencil or "magic" marking on the bottom of the first page of the comic.

I saw one artist devastate a fan who bought him a $10 comic to sign at a convention. The artist pulled out a fat red marker and defaced half the front cover with a sprawling signature.

Now — how much more is a signed comic worth?

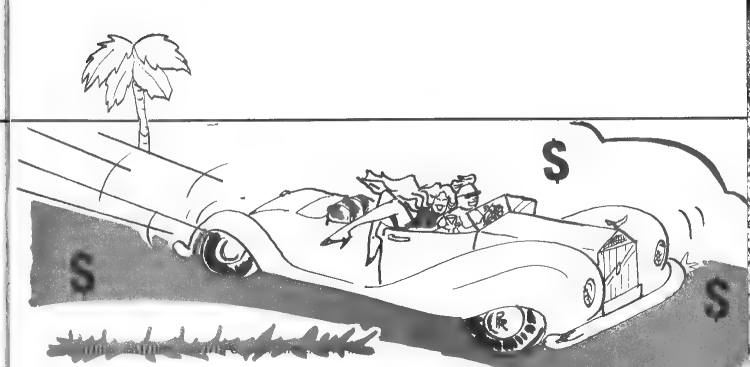
A signature on a book can increase its worth from 10 percent to 50 percent, depending upon the artist and the book. If the book is a first issue, then it increases in value much more than a regular issue.

For this reason, have an artist sign the most valuable book of his that you can find or afford—first issues, origin issues, whatever.

I also suggest that you be careful when buying autographed comics, unless you see the artist sign the book. Comic book artists' signatures are much harder to verify than say a major and recognizable author's signature.

At one convention I attended, the guest artist did not show up. I saw a few dealers happily signing his name for him on their books and selling them to unaware fans.

In a nutshell: try to get your own comics signed yourself — and don't pay too high a premium for any signed comics that you may buy.



ONCE A YEAR COLLECTOR'S ITEMS?

My favorite comic books as a kid were the old DC and Dell Annuals. You got 80 or more pages of comics for a quarter, and they always came out in the summer when you had plenty of vacation time to kick back and read and read.

Even back then in the early 1960s, these annuals had blurbs like: "SPECIAL COLLECTOR ISSUE" and "COLLECTOR'S EDITION!"

Ironically, many of these "collector's editions" from yesterday are not as collected or sought after as the regular comic book series.

I think that most collectors, when they go for old back issues, only buy annuals after they have completed their run of the main title. Batman annuals, for example, never sell as well as the regular issues in the series.

There are exceptions, of course. The most highly sought after "annual" is **Giant Size X-Men** 1 with the first appearance of the new X-Men. Even so, **X-Men** 94 (which has the SECOND appearance of the mutants) is worth more than the annual — primarily because it is part of an on-going series.

Collectors love series. And annuals are not part of a series.

So what does all of this mean? Every year, usually in the summer, dozens and dozens of annuals appear.

Some contain new material, many have reprints, but the overall fact is that few if any will be worth that much in the future collector's marketplace. They are mostly published to cash in on the summer buying days and for new readers who want to read old stories or old readers who want to remember old stories!

So if you're buying for investment, steer clear of the annuals.

But, if you're like me, and remember those lazy days of summer, then pick up one of those giant-size "collector's editions" for a good, long read.

...DREAMS...

HOTTIPS...HOTTIPS...HOTTIPS...HOTTIPS...HOTTIPS...

COMIC BOOKS OR RENT?

Maybe you know a collector like this: He skips meals to buy more comics. He works at a part-time job to support his comic book habit. He may even blow off rent or monthly bills just so he can get that "fantastic deal."

I think that everybody who collects comics at one time or another overextends himself financially. I know there were times when I missed the rent by a few days just so I could buy collections that would make me even more money.

Fortunately, even if a person bought every new comic that came out each month, he would spend less than $300. The real danger comes when you start buying back issues and pay collector's prices (like $30 a whack for a six-month old black and white alternative press comic).

It's even more dangerous when you convince yourself that all the money you're spending is for "investment" and that you'll make money. Usually the investment angle is just an excuse for more shameless financial over-indulgence.

If you really want to invest hard-earned cash in comics (and maybe even skip your rent to do so!), then you need a few facts about investment and portfolio planning.

John Dorfman, author of the **Family Investment Guide**, has said that investing in collectibles of any type should more properly be labeled as "speculating."

As such, he says that no more than 20 percent of your investment portfolio should be in collectibles. The rest should be put into stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.

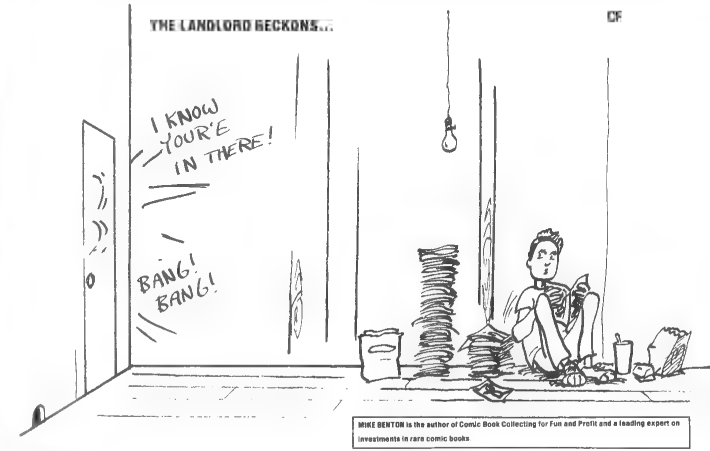
This means that if you spend $50 for a Golden Age comic as an investment item, you should also budget $250 to be put into more conventional avenues.

If you are an extremely knowledgeable investor, you can get away with putting 50 percent or more of your money into comics IF you watch and follow the market closely.

For most collectors, however, certainly no more than 10 percent of your net income should be spent on comic books, whether you're buying for fun or investment.

I suggest to all collectors that they budget wisely for both new issues and back issues of books. Never tie up all of your money in the new releases. Always slowly build a high quality collection of choice back issues to compliement your new comics.

And don't forget — rent's due next month!



MIKE BENTON is the author of Comic Book Collecting for Fun and Profit and a leading expert on investments in rare comic books.

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DOCTOR WHO FILE SIX.....THE PERTWEE YEARS
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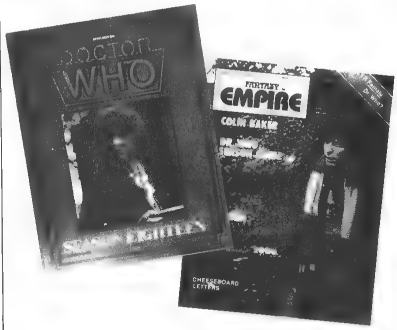

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WITH ARMOR AND SHIELD

BY JAMES VAN HISE

One day in the late 1960s, two warriors for the American way of life stepped out of the pages of **Tales of Suspense** to be awarded their own magazines. Both were born in a an age when Americans were confident in their own ideals and felt that they had something to offer to the world.

During the darkest days of the Second World War, as a Nazi juggernaut crushed the armies of Europe, conquering nation after nation, America decided to enter the war to protect the spirit of free democracy from the hordes of tyranny—how this was reconciled with taking on an ally like dear old Uncle Joe (Stalin) is difficult to understand—and a nation full of eager boys donned their uniforms and shipped off. Captain America, the very personification of such a boy, was injected with a super-soldier serum, put on a colorful costume and strode across the comic book pages to symbolize that very American spirit. Two decades later he was reborn in another time of need.

During the New Frontier of Jack Kennedy, America once again felt the spirit of idealism rouse the land as two quests began. One was a daring plan to use high technology to leap to the moon, while the other was to use equally sophisticated American know-how to help the people of South Vietnam resist Communist invasion from the north. Once again an alien ideology was striding across the map and once again it was to confront the sentinels of the American Way. Iron Man, born at the height of anti-Communist fervor in the jungles of Vietnam, donned a suit of high tech armor to sally forth to forcefully stand for the American dream.

Captain America symbolized what every American could be if only he trained and worked hard enough, personifying the American infantryman with no superpowers, carrying only a metal shield for protection. Iron Man, born in the early 1960s at a time when high technology seemed to be the American answer for the future, was a rich industrialist/scientist who clad himself in a modern marvel.

Both—each in his own way—stood for the American dream, and with some modifications, still do.

Captain America continues on page 28, Iron Man continues on page 32

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THE STAR SPANGLED SUPERHERO

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CAPTAIN AMERICA®

He was the comic world's premier symbol of patriotism through the darkest days of World War II. And what he stood for had not tarnished a bit when he stepped out of time to return to four-color life in 1964.

"Cap's uniqueness is that he represents something," says Mark Gruenwald, current writer of **Captain America**. "The other heroes are just who they are—they have no ideological baggage that they carry around with them. As a result, you can do much more generic stories with them. In **Captain America**, you can't have him do that and remain true to the character. He's not just there to stop bank robberies. He's there to uphold the ideals of America and foster the American dream. He'll fight anyone who would destroy the American dream for others.

"Cap is also the ultimate self-made man," Gruenwald adds. "It's true that he was given a serum which raised all his abilities to their fullest potential. But first, he had to choose to do that of his own free will. And second, he had to work on those abilities once they were there. You can have the raw ability but not the experience to know what to do with that ability. He had to work at hours of constant regimen, exercise and training so that he was combat-worthy, battle-ready and as capable as he is. I like that about him. He became the ideal man by the strength of his own character. It's not like he came from another planet and already had the power and didn't have to work on it. That doesn't mean that the other character hasn't worked on himself inside—there are other characters that are self-made."

As the writer of Cap, Gruenwald is extremely familiar with what has gone before in the continuity. He has thought about the strengths and weaknesses of the character.

"Stan Lee got me hooked on the character, although I think his later stories are too self-pityIng," Gruenwald observes. "My take on Cap is that he's so good at what he does that he's the one guy that hits the ground running. You can throw him into any situation and he's the first guy to figure out how to adapt, survive and prosper. That's what he's trained to be. He's the ultimate soldier, and that's what an ultimate soldier does.

"When Captain America shows up 20 years out of time, there's a moment of disorientation. But he should adapt, insure his survival and then prosper. The problem is that Stan wanted to make hay with the 20 years out of touch. In my opinion, he did it to death. He kept doing it, kept hitting it home. As a result, Cap was a bit of a wimp and kept complaining about his lot in life. Maybe in the first story that might happen, but in the second one—no. He would have figured out where he was and his place in it and done what he had to do to live up to his ideals. But despite that conceptual flaw, I really loved those old Stan & Jack stories.

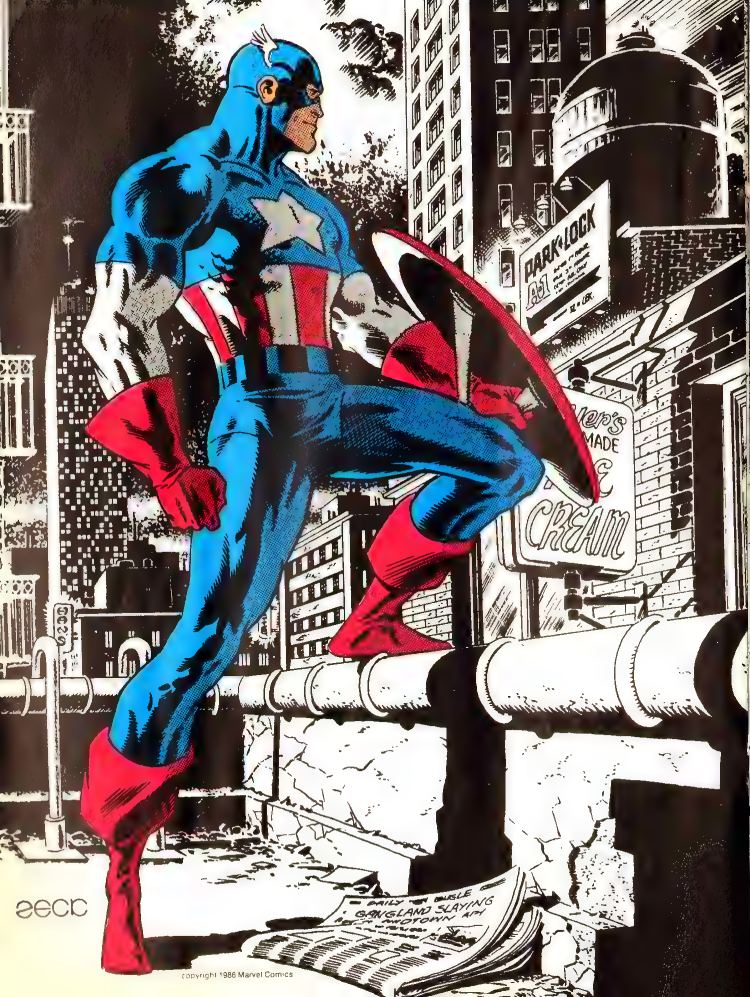
"There are other writers who really had interesting turns with it, such as Roger Stern." But Gruenwald has reservations about the story Stern did about Cap being asked to run for president. "That wasn't my favorite of the stories. Cap would be tempted for about two seconds because he'd be able to put his ideals in a place where he could effect the good of a lot of people. Then he would realize that once you enter a real system, you're going to have to give up some of those ideals."

Gruenwald feels that the three issues done by Jim Steranko were interesting. "Yeah, those were neat except that Cap was smoking in one of them.

"I also liked what Steve Englehart did and lots of the DeMatteis stuff, particularly the final storyline with the Red Skull."

He feels that, unfortunately, in some cases, the writers on **Captain America** attempted to remold Cap in their own images.

"In a certain way, it was admirable, but some writers tried to make Cap relate to the times that he was in. They sometimes did that at the expense of his traditional values which transcend politics. He's not politically oriented. He does not support any given president or concept of the President. Right now, many people would assume that he's a rabid Reagan supporter even though Cap came out of the era of FDR and the New Deal, which is very different from Reagan. But Cap should transcend all that and represent all the political realities of this country. He should remain true to his basic values and ideals. His ideals have not



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changed. Some have tried too much to go with what is popular in the prevailing political wind at that time. That's a misunderstanding of the character."

THE RETURN OF NOMAD

Many long-time Captain America fans were dismayed to learn that the hero whose exploits they followed in the 1950s was nothing but an imposter with good intentions. But Gruenwald enjoyed the resolution of that story.

"I thought that was very clever. That's one of those Marvel kinds of things they do when they're trying to account for everything. And now we have Nomad, who used to be that Fifties version of Bucky."

The Cap impersonator and his young friend, who had always idolized the original Bucky, had shot up with a duplicate super-soldier serum. The formula had been made based on the notebook taken from a Nazi spy. But the serum was imperfect and our government put the duo into suspended animation for a time. Reawakened in the Seventies, they were subdued and again put on ice. Defrosted once again, the ersatz Cap finally died due to a plot of Dr. Faustus. The boy, Jack Monroe, was cured of the serum's side-effects by SHIELD who then gave him the identity of Nomad. (A nom-de-guerre previously used by others, including Steve Rogers.)

"In issues 325 and 326, I finally bring Nomad back," Gruenwald reveals. "He hasn't been seen since issue 309. Nomad left the strip trying to find a way of his own to be a defender of America. While he shares a lot of Cap's ideals, he does not believe that the system will always work.

"We have a character called The Slug, who is Miami's drug kingpin. He lives on a yacht outside U.S. territorial waters and does everything through middlemen so that he can't be caught. It can't be proven that he does anything wrong and so he lives beyond the law. Nomad doesn't care that it can't be proven that The Slug broke the law. He knows what The Slug is and this brings him into conflict with C.A., who believes in 'innocent until proven guilty' in a court of law.

"The great thing about Captain America is that you get to represent extreme ideological positions by creating characters and playing them off of him. When Spider-Man is fighting somebody, he's not representing spiders—he's just a guy who's trying to be responsible. He represents himself against somebody who's being irresponsible. They don't have the ideological resonance that Captain America at his best has. Anyone who's as devoted to his ideals as Cap is, has an extreme position because anyone who's more moderate is forsaking those ideals," Gruenwald explains.

"Flagsmasher had his own extreme view of patriotism—that the world would be much better off without petty concepts of country which he felt divided people instead of uniting them. He found Cap to be a symbol of American superiority. That's what's fun about writing the book. You can think of an extreme viewpoint that is not Cap's, and then work out all the fine points that would make it a well-rounded character."

A NEW PARTNER IN THE FUTURE?

Captain America #327 returns the Super Patriot in a story called "Clashing Symbols." The name fits well because although Cap didn't clash with the character when they first met in 324, they definitely have a conflict this time around!

"Captain America battles the Super Patriot in the parking lot outside of a Live Aid concert," Gruenwald reveals.

Due to the fight, Captain America decides to track down more information about the Super Patriot (in issue #328.) Cap figures that Super Patriot may have come from the new Unlimited Class wrestling federation since the Patriot is even stronger than the red, white and blue avenger himself.

"Cap doesn't intend to," Gruenwald explains, "but in #328, he gets another short-term partner—Demolition Man!" This is a wrestler who is also ten times stronger than Cap. "All of Cap's past partners—Bucky, Rick Jones, the Falcon and Nomad—have been less powerful than he is, so he was naturally the dominant figure in the partnership. But this new guy can lift ten tons, so he's no slouch in the power department and he's half a head taller than C.A., so there's a different kind of relationship with D-Man, as he's called."

Issue 329 continues that storyline when even the new Ms. Marvel joins in. She had undergone treatment from the Power Broker and so is interested in nailing him for something while Cap investigates whether there is any connection between the criminal mastermind and the Super Patriot.

The biggest villain Cap faced in the last couple of years was Scourge, but even after his assassination, the saga still goes on!

"The Scourge will not be reappearing in the next six months, but I do want to get back to that mystery within the next year," Gruenwald states. "For one thing, if I brought him back I'd have to find more villains for him to kill. I already did a story called 'Overkill' and we may start running out of real bad villains and have to start tapping into the medium range ones—unless I create a new bunch! So I've decided to wait awhile before bringing back a guy whose stock in trade is killing off other villains."

In early 1987, a major subplot will be introduced that involves Cap with the IRS. They'll audit his income tax returns and be suspicious at his dramatic rise in income when the U.S. government chose to suddenly pay him a million dollars in back pay in one lump sum. It came about because the Army had never declared Cap legally dead after World War II.

"There are going to be various governmental intrigues that start with the IRS auditing his tax returns and ultimately force him to redefine his relationship with the U.S. government that sponsored the Super Soldier experiment in 1940. The ramifications are going to be great and it's going to change the book quite drastically."

And so the event that begins as a small subplot in issue 327, will completely change the book just six issues later.

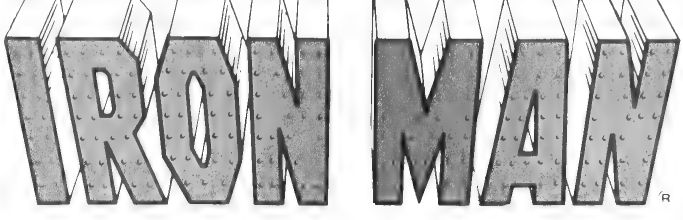
This will mark another major change in the career of Cap since Mark Gruenwald took over the series. One other change had the Avenger abandon his civilian identity, leaving him permanently and always the symbol of America.

"I got rid of the supporting cast that Roger Stern had established for Cap because I felt it tied him down," says Gruenwald. "I respected what Stern was trying to do, though, which was to balance Cap the living legend with a Steve Rogers who had a life as a normal guy with a girl friend, an apartment and a job. That kept him away from being a more effective fighting symbol of America."

In his fourth decade, the legend fights on!

THE CORPORATE SUPERHERO

THE INVINCIBLE



Iron Man was conceived almost as a business man's ideal superhero. Industrialist, inventor, playboy and superhero, it seemed that the armored avenger had it all. But the character failed to ignite the imagination the way that a youth with the proportionate strength of a spider, a Norse god of thunder or that sentinel of liberty, Captain America could. His main attraction is that it seems that anyone can wear the armor and become a superhero. But it takes a man of the moral fibre of a Tony Stark to wear it well.

During an exciting four years (1978-82) of Iron Man history, that armor was worn even better than usual. That was when David Michelinie penned the tales and Bob Layton both illustrated and co-plotted them. Now Michelinie is back beginning with Issue 215. He hadn't planned to return, though.

"I hadn't really thought that I would," Michelinie admits, "but the editor called me...I thought about it overnight and then decided that I would do it."

Michelinie continues, "I left Iron Man in 1982, three issues after Bob Layton did. The reason I quit is that we felt that we'd done everything with it that we'd set out to do. But the book now is so different that there's many more possibilities.

"One thing I plan to do is bring the stories down to Earth more. Danny had been getting into plots that I have no interest in continuing for very long. He had a space station and a shuttle angle going on, but I prefer to keep things down on Earth and have the adventures centered there. It's not that these were bad storylines, it's just that my interest is not in outer space. I prefer storylines that take place on earth with realistic people in realistic situations. But I want to try to make the transition as clean as possible. I'm not going to blow everything up on page one. I plan to work things out logically."

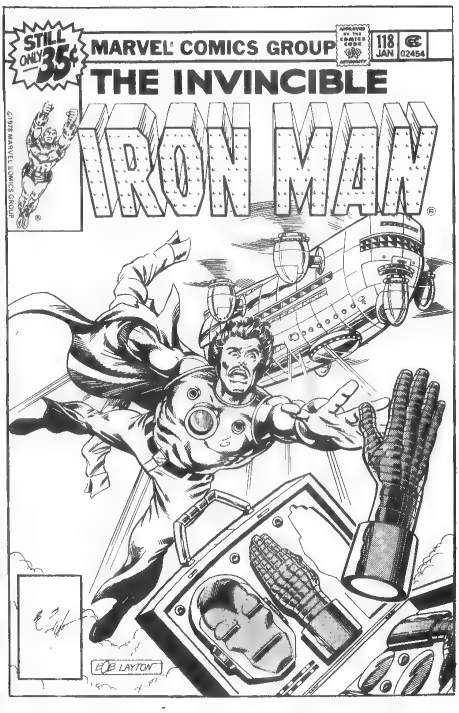
Among the many things which have changed over the past four years is the loss of Stark International and even the locale that Tony Stark operates out of. The series used to focus on New York City.

"Iron Man is now located at the end of the country," Michelinie continues. "I'm going to start gradually changing things over the first year by having him put everything he has into starting up another business—an electronics firm specializing in high tech hardware. Then he will modularize by buying up small companies which are on the brink of going under. He'll make them successful and modularize, finally going international and building up to where he was before."

It is interesting to remember that Tony Stark began as a millionaire industrialist back before the social revolution of the mid and late '60s, back at a time when it was not a contradiction for a businessman to be a superhero, and the rich could be honorable as well as wealthy. He fit firmly into what was then the tradition for superheroics, stretching from the Scarlet Pimpernel and Zorro all the way to Batman. As time went on it became necessary to distance the hero from the establishment much as DC Comics had done with Oliver Queen, the Green Arrow. Now, in the '80s, it seems once again possible for a hero to be wealthy and striving for business success. The entrepenaur is honored and so Stark becomes an entrepenaur.

Michelinie reveals that there will be other changes as well, "Some things will happen to him that haven't happened to Stark before, things involving politics. He's going into all sorts of technology with the new company. One example of a storyline we could get into would involve Ice Minus, the genetically altered frost inhibitor. Another possible storyline would involve a fuel farm using organically altered fuel substitutes. It's almost like starting at square one. Space technology would not be ignored in the new stories, but it will be in the background."

When Michelinie was writing the book before, he included a storyline in which SHIELD tried to force Stark into manufacturing munitions, something which he is ethically op-



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posed to.

"Yes," he recalls, "there was a renegade cell in SHIELD, but Stark also discovered that Nick Fury was buying up stock to try to get a controlling interest so that Stark International would be forced into making munitions again.

"Plus it's a whole different world now from what it was five years ago. The 'Star Wars' technology can be expected to play a role in future stories, as well as terrorists.

"There could also be a storyline in which Stark's technology is used for weapons in ways that he didn't intend them to be, and he would have to deal with the fact that he has created something which can be used as a weapon."

A BRIGHT ARTIST

Mark Bright, the current artist on **Iron Man**, joined Marvel about four and one half years ago after sending "them **Power Man/Iron Fist** and a lot of X-Men samples." The artist landed assignments on **Dazzler** and **Fantastic Four Annual 18**. He was also the regular artist for **Power Man/Iron Fist** until it was cancelled. Then just a year ago, he landed the job as regular illustrator of **Iron Man**.

"Denny O'Neil was the editor of **Power Man** and knew I needed work, and Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio said, 'He can draw **Iron Man**' and that was it. I had drawn an issue of **Avengers** once and they knew what my Iron Man looked like from that."

A pleasant surprise for long-time Iron Man fans is the identity of the inker who will sign on with issue 215—Bob Layton!

"I worked with Bob once before—he inked a cover that I drew, so I know that we work very well together. I'm really looking forward to working with him!"

Although Bright has already been drawing **Iron Man** for a year, he'll be concentrating on different aspects of the book under the guidance of Michelinie.

"I'll be doing more with the technology because it's going to become a lot more real. I'll be putting more into making the machinery work and into the characterization than I have before." Bright enjoyed drawing the outer space hardware but realizes that now he'll have different challenges. "That was a lot of fun, but Dave wants to do more character-building with Iron Man."

When asked what it is about the ar-

**HAVE ARMOR—
WILL TRAVEL!**

mor clad superhero that he particularly likes drawing, Bright quickly replies, "He flies!"

SILVER VERSUS GOLD

Another change since Michelinie left the book is in the armor. This time it's not even a variation of the specialty armor which Michelinie and Layton had introduced into the continuity.

"My ultimate goal is to get back to the gold armor," the writer reveals. "It's not that I'm a traditionalist, it's just that when I've seen him in the **West Coast Avengers** with the new armor, the silver and red doesn't stand out—it's not as vibrant as the gold armor. I don't care for it so we're going to slowly introduce new armor which has more of a neck to it. We're also going to come up with a new power source for the armor so that it won't need those huge solar panels on the shoulders. The new armor has been a step backwards because Iron Man has to reach behind his back to get at the tools and things he needs instead of just reaching down to his waist in front of him. The solar power in his suit would just serve as a backup."

When asked whether the silver and red armor was consciously altered to make Iron Man look more like a Go-bot, Michelinie laughs. "I've used the term Transformer myself. I think what they wanted was to upgrade his armor in keeping with the advancing technology and have an all-purpose type armor for going into outer space or down to the bottom of the ocean rather than having the different specialty armors such as Bob Layton and I had developed for him. I can understand that, but how many times are you going to be on an adventure and have to dive down to the bottom of the Mariana Trench? It seems to me that the armor the hero would wear every day for all kinds of things would be the most comfortable and efficient. But they felt that the new armor made him look more modern and more powerful."

MAKING IT EXCITING AGAIN

After Michelinie left **Iron Man**, he continued to read the title, but only up to a point.

"I don't want to sound like I'm putting it down, but I followed it until they started redoing the alcoholism storyline. Then I lost interest in it; I'd already done that, although they took a completely different viewpoint." Michelinie continues, "I know that Denny had his reasons for handling it that way because there were things that he wanted to explore."

Michelinie is happy with the art team he'll be working with. "Mark Bright is the penciller and Bob Layton is the inker. Mark is very good at drawing the hardware, which is very important to a strip like this."

Describing Iron Man, a character he has been so involved with in the past, the writer makes the hero sound much like Captain America.

"Iron Man, or more accurately Tony Stark, is a hero in every sense of the word. Although he's not the kind of character who goes around spouting slogans about truth, justice and the American way, he does believe in them."

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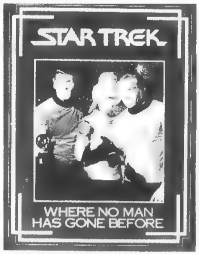

And then came the movies when the fans of the show simply would not let it die! The adventure continues in a series of episodes even more elaborate in the production and special effects. These volumes combine interviews with story synopsis and perceptive analysis to retell the continuing Star Trek adventure.

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STAR TREK MOVIE FILE THREE. SEARCH FOR SPOCK

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MPS

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Independent Line

A RENAISSANCE IN COMICS ?

Renaissance Comics of Columbus, Georgia plans three new titles for the near future. The first, **Carcajou**, tells the tale of a demon hero, while the other two, **A Fitch in Time** and **Kol Manique** are respectively about Lydia Fitch—height 5 ft ½, weight 98 pounds—who disappeared from her job 113 years ago, and a one elf invasion of St. Louis.

The creative team on **Carcajou** is Willie Peppers and Brad Vancata on pencils, Steve Addlesee on inks, with a script by Steve Addlesee and Gail Freeman. **A Fitch in Time** is by Flint Baker, penciller, Willie Peppers, inker, and John La Pietra. Karlton Clemons, Bryan Gibson and Steve Addlesee are responsible for **Kol Manique**.

NOVEL CHRISTMAS FROM FIRST

First Comics will release three graphic novels in November in time for Christmas, publisher Rick Obadiah announced today.

"Last year, First Comics responded to requests from retailers for more products during the traditionally heavy Christmas sales season by publishing the **Nexus Graphic Novel**, Obadiah states. "This year we've made a list and checked it *three* times!"

First on the First list is **The Secret Island of Oz**, writer/artist Eric Shanower's second full color Oz graphic novel. Based on characters and concepts created by L. Frank Baum, it features Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, Eureka the talking cat and several new characters.

Following that will be **The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Graphic Novel** by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird (more on this on the next page!) and **Time Squared** by Howard Chaykin.

The Turtles will present the first three issues of perhaps the most popular black in white series of them all in color. Chaykin's book is the first of an ongoing series of graphic novels, beginning with The Epiphany, which Chaykin describes as "sword and sorcery for those who prefer hard-boiled crime fiction" and "a murder mystery in which it really doesn't matter 'who done it.'"

NEW BLACKTHORNE

Blackthorne has a few new titles planned for the immediate future. These include **Ground Pound**, which reprints a sampling of work from the underground artist John Pound. The strips, which were previously published during the last 15 years, include stories devoted to Ronald Rabbit, Flip the Bird and Hunter Thompson in a Separate Reality. John Pound is something different for those tired of run-of-the-mill funny animal comics.

Also planned is a parody of the Legion of Superheroes, entitled **Legion of Stupid-Heroes**, and created by Taylor Overby, Mike Helms and Julian Kernes; **Blackthorne's 3 in 1** featuring Merlin Realm by Mark Wayne Harris and Nicholas Koenig, Curse of the Moon Beast, by MacGillivray and Huston and Starlight Squadron by Dennis Francis; **Rivit—The Cold-Blooded Commando Frog**; **Of Myths and Men**; **Figments**, a tale of a regal rat, a shady shapeshifter, several dead wizards and a young boy and **Danse**.

How can the same company that releases excellent reprintings of such classic comic strips as Dick Tracy, Kerry Drake, Prince Valiant, On Stage, Annie, Smokey Stovers, Tarzan, Brenda Starr, The Katzenjammer Kids, Star Hawks, the Green Beret and Little Nemo (see **HAPPY HAL'S HOWLINGS** for an unabashed plug!) release such an assortment of garbage? That may be one of the mysteries of the universe, and the saddest thing of all is that a forest died for these!

ZORRO!

One of the most famous swashbuckling heroes of all time will soon see a new debut from Eclipse Comics according to publisher Dean Mullaney (a former editor of **COMICS FEATURE**).

Mullaney hopes that the one-shot will sell well enough to become the first of a regular series. The release will reprint material that has previously appeared only in Europe in the French magazine, **Journal de Mickey**, written by Nadaud and drawn by Marcello.

Of course the Zorro character is well known throughout the world. In fact tales of the nobleman hero of early California have been created for almost every entertainment medium including television and movies. And the Eclipse version is far from the first American appearance of the hero in comic books!

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

NU EARTH. A PLANET RAVAGED BY FUTURE WAR. OVER A SOUTHER POSITION, THE CLOAK OF NIGHT IS PIERCED BY A PHOTON FLARE.
ROGUE TROOPER
DON'T SHOOT, BOYS—WE'RE YOUR SIDE!
WELL I'LL BE DAMNED!
2000AD Credit Card:
SCRIPT ROBOT
ART ROBOT
LETTERING ROBOT
U-73e

QUALITY COMICS

Dez Skinn is back. This time as Quality Comics. What does that mean? Let me tell you something about him.

First he cloned **Starlog** and created **Starburst**. It was a good magazine about sci fi film personalities. So Marvel UK bought it and hired Dez as an editor.

But before that happened, he cloned a Warren magazine—remember **Eerie, Creepy** and **Vampirella** ?—and created **Warrior**.

Dez made a living copying American magazines. But he did one odd thing—he made his copies better. **Starburst** was more interesting than **Starlog**, it had more energy, more life. **Warrior** was better than any Warren magazine had been in over a decade. Before they had a falling out—they won't stay in the same room now—Dez brought Alan Moore the recognition he deserved in the pages of **Warrior**. Miracleman—then still an unadulterated Marvelman—, Laser Eraser, Spiral Path and various and sundry other series recently released by American publishers crawled off of the pages of Dez's magazine.

This time Dez is doing something different. Instead of cloning an American magazine and bringing it across the great pond, he has taken a line of comics away from a British publisher, **Eagle** Comics. Eagle had been repackaging a number of IPC strips—IPC is the UK's biggest publisher of magazines, perhaps the world's—, offering them in a way palatable to Americans and shipping them off to the Colonies. And so we finally got to see color versions of Judge Dredd, Sam Slade, Rogue Trooper, Stainless Steel Rat and so on.

Now Quality has taken the heroes away from Eagle, and Dez has already improved them. Much as I love the guys at Eagle—Lake, Landau and Luckman, sounds as if they escaped from some early Silver Age Superman comics—they gave me a headache. When they took the panels off a British-size comic page and moved it to an American one, they made the print *very* tiny! So I stopped reading them.

Quality Comics is doing something to see that the type stays nice and big.

At only $1.25 for 48 promised-adless pages, they're worth reading now. And so Judge Dredd, Rogue Trooper, Sam Slade and all the other stalwart Brits will be part of my monthly fare.

EPIC

- ☐ SWASHBUCKLERS #11—
- ☐ BRAD THE WANDERER #25—
- ☐ ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN #6—
- ☐ ELFQUEST #20—
- ☐ STEELGRIP STARKEY #5—

COMICO

- ☐ ROBOTECH MASTERS #12—
- ☐ JONNY QUEST #6—
- ☐ GRENDEL #3—
- ☐ ROBOTECH THE NEW GENERATION #12—
- ☐ GRENDEL HARDCOVER COLLECTION—

ECLIPSE

- ☐ THE NEW WAVE #9—
- ☐ JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA INDEX #5—
- ☐ SCOUT #13—
- ☐ TALES OF TERROR #9—
- ☐ AIRBOY #9—
- ☐ ESPERS #3—
- ☐ HAWKMAN INDEX #1—
- ☐ 3-D THREE STOOGES #2—
- ☐ THE NEW WAVE #10—
- ☐ AIRBOY #10—
- ☐ CHAMPIONS #6—
- ☐ JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA INDEX #6—
- ☐ NEW DNAGENTS #15—

FIRST COMICS

- ☐ NEXUS #30—
- ☐ BADGER #21—
- ☐ THE SECRET ISLAND OF OZ GRAPHIC NOVEL—
- ☐ AMERICAN FLAGG! #38—
- ☐ DYNAMO JOE #5—
- ☐ TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES GRAPHIC NOVEL
- ☐ TIME GRAPHIC NOVEL—
- ☐ JON SABLE, FREELANCE #45—
- ☐ THE CHRONICLES OF CORUM #2—
- ☐ HAWKMOON: THE MAD GOD'S AMULET #2—

QUALITY

- ☐ JUDGE DREDD #6—
- ☐ 2000 AD PRESENTS #12—
- ☐ SAM SLADE AND ASSOCIATES #6—
- ☐ ROGUE TROOPER #6—
- ☐ SPELLBINDERS #4—
- ☐ THE STEEL CLAW #4—

MISC.

- ☐ ELFLORD #3 (Aircel)—
- ☐ DRAGONFLY #5 (Americomics)—
- ☐ VENTURE #2 (Americomics)—
- ☐ GUMBY 3-D #2 (Blackthorne)—
- ☐ CHARLTON BULLSEYE SPECIAL #1 (Charlton)—
- ☐ ARMOR #3 (Continuity)—
- ☐ MEGALITH #4 (Continuity)—
- ☐ TOYBOY #7 (Continuity)—
- ☐ ECHO OF FUTUREPAST #12 (Continuity)—
- ☐ ANYTHING GOES #4 (Fantagraphics)—
- ☐ DOOMSDAY SQUAD #7 (Fantagraphics)—
- ☐ TIME WARRIORS #3 (Fantasy General)—
- ☐ ONE-SHOT WESTERN (Fantasy General)—
- ☐ MARAUDERS OF THE BLACK SUN #2 (Fant. Gen)
- ☐ TIME OUT OF MIND #3 (Graphic Serials)—
- ☐ CHROME #2 (Hot)—
- ☐ SATURDAY KNIGHTS #2 (Hot)—
- ☐ carcajou #2 (Renaissance)—
- ☐ A FITCH IN TIME #2 (Renaissance)—
- ☐ KOL MANIQUE #2 (Renaissance)—
- ☐ MISTER X BOOK #1 (Vortex)—

[redacted]

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF BLACK AND WHITE COMICS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO BE PRODUCED DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER; PLEASE NOTE THAT MANY OF THESE PUBLISHERS ARE VERY BAD AT MAINTAINING THEIR PROMISED SHIPPING SCHEDULES AND THAT MANY OF THESE BOOKS WILL EITHER BE LATE OR NEVER EVEN APPEAR AT ALL. THE QUALITY OF THESE BOOKS RANGES FROM THE EXCELLENT TO THE ABSOLUTELY AWFUL. ALL TITLES ARE LISTED ALPHABETICALLY BY PUBLISHER.

[redacted]

- ☐ PUMA BLUES #1—
- ☐ CEREBUS #92—
- ☐ ROBIN RED & THE LUTINS #1—
- ☐ WARDEX #1—
- ☐ BEGINNING #5—
- ☐ SAMURAI #12—
- ☐ STARK: FUTURE #6—
- ☐ WARLOCK FIVE #1—
- ☐ MANHAZINE #5—
- ☐ NINJA HIGH SCHOOL #1—
- ☐ THE REALM #5—
- ☐ CROW OF THE BEARCLAN #2—
- ☐ DICK TRACY MONTHLY #7—
- ☐ FAILED UNIVERSE #1—
- ☐ HAMSTER VICE #4—
- ☐ JACK AND THE HELL HOUND #1—
- ☐ LABOR FORCE #2—
- ☐ LAFFIN' GAS #—
- ☐ MAD DOG MAGAZINE #1—
- ☐ MIDNITE #1—
- ☐ PRETEEN DIRTY GENE KUNG FU KANGAROOS
- ☐ 3 IN ONE #1—
- ☐ FORCE AND THE HERO NETWORK #1—
- ☐ MICRA #2—
- ☐ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #1—
- ☐ BORIS THE BEAR #1—
- ☐ ADOL. RADIO. BLACK BELT HAMSTERS #4
- ☐ DESTROY ! #1—
- ☐ ELFTHING #1—
- ☐ P. J. WARLOCK #1—
- ☐ SPACED #11—
- ☐ TALES FROM THE PLAGUE—
- ☐ SOLD OUT #2—
- ☐ CRITTERS #10—
- ☐ GOOD GIRLS #1—
- ☐ HONK #3—
- ☐ LOVE AND ROCKETS #—0—
- ☐ NEAT STUFF #6—
- ☐ PRIME CUTS #1—
- ☐ THREAT #10—
- ☐ BUNDER WUNLUS #3—
- ☐ OMAHA THE CAT DANCER #3—
- ☐ THE SPIRIT #25—
- ☐ GIZMO #4—
- ☐ GOBBLEDYGOOK #1—
- ☐ PRIME SLIME TALES #3—
- ☐ RALPH SNART VOL II #2—
- ☐ BRYMWYCK THE IMP #1—
- ☐ BUG #1—
- ☐ GERIATRIC GANGRENE JUJITSU GERBILS #2—
- ☐ ALTERNATE HERO #2—
- ☐ SIMON AND KIRBY CLASSICS #1—
- ☐ BUCE N GAR #1—
- ☐ DARKLORD #1—
- ☐ THUNDERMACE #2—
- ☐ BLACK ZEPPELIN #6—
- ☐ LOVE FANTASY #1—
- ☐ MS. TREE #34—
- ☐ OPEN SEASON #1—
- ☐ REVOLVER ANNUAL #1—
- ☐ SILENT INVASION #5—
- ☐ WORDSMITH #7—
- ☐ CHEECH WIZARD #1—
- ☐ CRACK BUSTERS #1—
- ☐ THE DUNGEONEERS #3—
- ☐ ERADICATORS #1—
- ☐ FAT NINJA #4—
- ☐ GRIPS #3—
- ☐ HERO SANDWICH #2—
- ☐ IT'S SCIENCE WITH DR. RADIUM #2—
- ☐ BUSHIDO BLADE OF ZATOICHI WALRUS #1—
- ☐ EMPTY BALLOONS #2—
- ☐ SULTRY TEENAGE SUPER FOXES #1—
- ☐ L.T. CAPER #2—
- ☐ STERN WHEELER #1—
- ☐ KAPTAIN KEEN & KOMPANY #1—
- ☐ KELVIN MACE #1—
- ☐ SAVAGE HENRY #1—
- ☐ YUMMY FUR #1—
- ☐ ADV RICK RAYGUN #4—
- ☐ BOFFO LAFFS #3—
- ☐ CRIMSON DREAMS #10—
- ☐ DARK ADVENTURES #2—
- ☐ DEATH CRAZED TEENAGE SUPERHEROES #2—
- ☐ DEMON'S BLOOD #1—
- ☐ DRIFTERS AFAR #2—
- ☐ DYSPERSIA #1—
- ☐ EQUINE, THE UNCIVILIZED #2—
- ☐ ESCAPE VELOCITY #1—
- ☐ FRAGMENTS #1—
- ☐ HEY BOSS! #1—
- ☐ IN COUNTRY 'NAM #2—
- ☐ IRON SAGA'S ANTHOLOGY #1—
- ☐ JAPAN #1—
- ☐ KNIGHT MASTERS #6—
- ☐ NERVE: FEATURING GO-MAN #3—
- ☐ NO SUCH THING AS MONSTERS #4—
- ☐ NULL PATROL #2—
- ☐ PHANTACEA #6—
- ☐ PRYDERI TERRA #2—
- ☐ RENEGADE RABBIT #1—
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- ☐ ULTRA KLUTZ #5—
- ☐ UNDIE DOG #1—

BY WILLIAM SILVESTER

DISNEY ON STAMPS

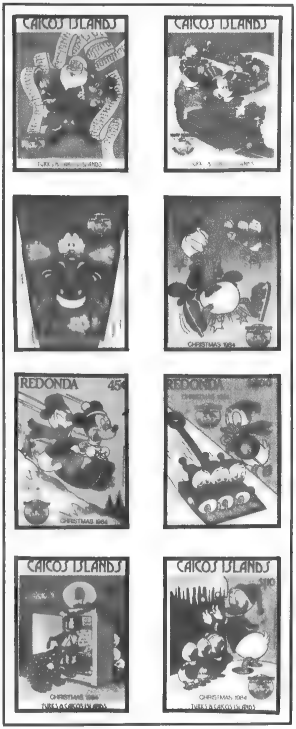
Sometimes the antics of animated characters wind up in the strangest places!

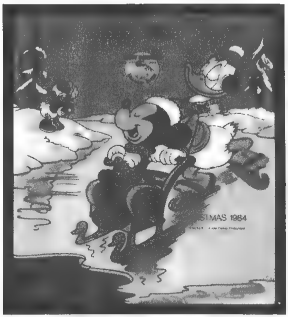
Stamp collecting is the world's most popular hobby. Beginning in 1840 when Great Britain issued the world's first adhesive postage stamp, it has grown in size and stature over the ensuing 146 years. Today every country in the world issues stamps varying from everyday use definitives to colourful, exciting commemoratives. One of the most popular of the latter group are the stamps featuring designs by the artists at Walt Disney Productions, including the excellent work of Carl Barks.

BEGINNINGS

The very first Disney stamp was issued by the United States in 1968, a single 6 cent depicting Walt Disney. Two years later, the Republic of San Marino issued a set of 10 stamps, each one featuring a Disney character and a scene from the feature film *The Jungle Book* on the highest denomination.

In 1979, Walt Disney Productions, the Intergovernmental Philatelic Corporation and six postal governments joined stogether to produce a Disney omnibus collection. It was the International Year of the Child and what better way to commemorate it. The island nations of Dominica, Grenada, Grenada Grenadines, Turks & Caicos Islands, Maldives and Antigua each issued a set of nine stamps and a souvenir sheet depicting Disney characters in various themes. The souvenir sheet sometimes showed a scene from a Disney short. All the artwork for these sets and those which followed was done by Disney artists in the





Disney studios. Even the production of the sets was supervised by WDP to ensure a high standard of printing reproduction.

The original omnibus was slated to contain 24 different sets of stamps; to date this has swollen to almost 100.

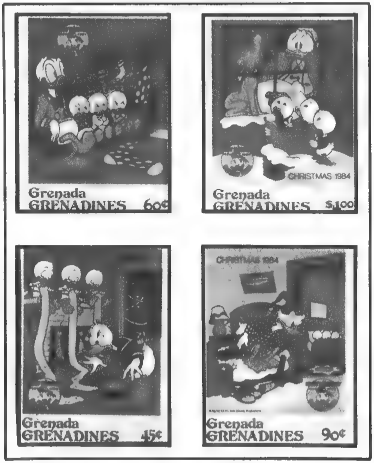
For Christmas 1980 came the biggest treat of all. Six sets and souvenir sheets were issued featuring actual scenes drawn from colour balanced transparencies from Disney feature length animated motion pictures such as *Pinocchio* (Turks & Caicos Is.), *Snow White* (Grenada), *Peter Pan* (Grenadines), *Bambi* (Dominica) and *Sleeping Beauty* (Antigua).

Over the next few years more special occasions were marked by the issuance of Disney designed stamps. Pluto's 50th Anniversary was noted with small sheets of stamps which, when complete, listed a complete Pluto filmography. Scenes from Pluto shorts graced the souvenir sheets. Christmas of 1981 saw six more sets with scenes from the movies *Cinderella* and *Lady and the Tramp* as well as the Silly Symphonies "Night Before Christmas" and "Santa's Workshop".

Two series of sets were issued in 1982, one to publicize World Cup Espana and the usual Christmas sets with scenes from the films *Jungle Book*, *Robin Hood*, *101 Dalmations* and others.

No other Disney sets were issued until Christmas 1983. In a break from tradition these sets did not feature films but instead were more closely related to the other sets featuring Disney characters in Christmas settings.

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics afforded sets featuring Disney characters participating in the games. For Easter of that year, more sets were released depicting Easter related themes.



CHRISTMAS 1984

It is the Christmas 1984 sets which are of most interest to comic book collectors. Thirteen sets were issued, some of which commemorated Donald Duck's 50th Anniversary. For the first time the original art from Disney comic books and strips — valuable collectibles themselves — are the source for several of the new issues.

Comic book art works well in the postage stamp medium for comic art is very much like that of stamp art, wherein the single picture must stand complete in themselves.

Drawing upon Disney archives, editorial and art departments, Walt Disney Productions prepared the stamp designs expressly for these issues. Current Disney artists used the original line art from famous comic book covers and panels and then prepared fresh paintings in colours specified by the originating respective artists.

Thus the new stamp art represents work of some of the most famous cartoon artists in the history of the art medium. In some cases the stamp art is more true to the original intent of the artist than are the comics from which the art was taken.

These stamps have a very different feel from the other Disney issues, retaining the sparkling comic book cover look. Each set centers around a particular theme and has its own design elements: Calcos Islands stamps portray Donald celebrating a traditional Christmas; Dominica — collector favourites of Donald Duck Christmas covers; Grenada — Donald as Santa; Grenada Grenadines — Donald's Christmas with his nephews; Redonda — Donald in winter sports; and Antingua — Caribbean cruise holiday.

Each of the sets also features a sheetlet of 8 stamps with a tab. Each tab carries a special Duck cartoon from old comics or archival 'scrap'.

The specifics of the sets are listed below based on the Press Releases of the Intergovernmental Philatelic Corporation.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA—

(8 single stamps, 1 sheetlet, 2 souvenir sheets and a cachet [envelope])

1 —Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 19, #10—Barks
2 —Walt Disney Comics& Stories—Vol. 8, #11—Barks
3 —Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 11, #9—Taliaferro
4 —Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 15, #9—Barks
5 —Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 18, #7—Barks
10 —Donald Duck—Nov/Dec '57—Strubl
$1—Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 12, #11—Strubl
$2—Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 9, #12—Barks
$5—Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 11, #10—Barks
S/S $5—Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 9, #10—Kelly
S/S $5Evolution of Donald Duck from 1934-1959
Cachet—Donald Duck and the Golden Helmet—Four Color #408—Barks

CAICOS ISLANDS—

4 single stamps, 1 sheetlet, 1 souvenir sheet

20 —Christmas Parade #4—Gunn
35 —Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 9, #4—Kelly
50 —Christmas Parade #4—Pablen
75 —Christmas Parade #2—McSavage
$1.10—Walt Disney Comics & Stories—Vol. 20, #4—Barks
S/S $2—Christmas Parade #4—Gunn

DOMINICA—

4 single stamps, 1 sheetlet, 1 souvenir sheet, and a chachet

45 —Christmas Parade #2—Pablen
60 —Donald Duck—1952—Barks
90 —Christmas Parade #1—Kelly
$2—Donald Duck in Frozen Gold—1945—Barks
$4—Golden Christmas Tree—1948—Barks
S/S $5—Christmas on Bear Mountain—1947—Barks
Cachet—Donald Duck's Merry Christmas #53—Strobl

GRENADA—

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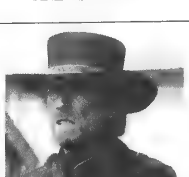

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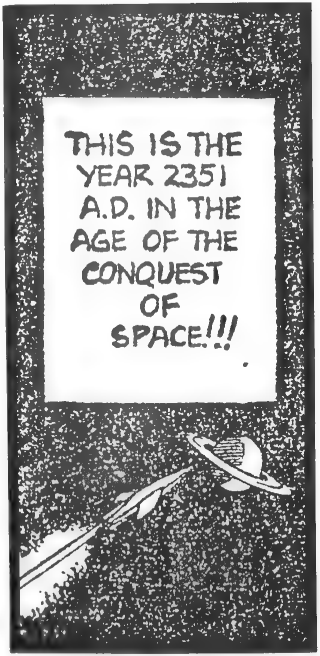


The decade of the 1950s can be looked back on in several different ways. Show business usually sees it as a period filled with nothing but hoody yet terrifically decent teenagers who lived out their entire lives on street corners or at drive-ins and proms. To political pundits, the Fifties is an uneasy ten years of Eisenhower dullness, McCarthy witchhunting and Asian entanglements. The decade was also the time of the Cold War and Sputnik and an all out technological competition between the West and Russia. One of the side effects of this contest was an increased interest in the sciences in America, extending even to a boom in science fiction. New SF magazines blossomed on the stands, movies chockfull of alien invaders and weird mutants proliferated and several new comic strips showed up in the nation's newspapers.

SPACE CADET

Television, that increasingly popular technological marvel, provided the first big new science fiction strip of the Fifties. **Tom Corbett, Space Cadet**, starring the always youthful Frankie Thomas, Jr., had come to television in 1950. The doings of Tom, Astro, Roger and all the gang from the Space Academy captivated the youth of the day and led to considerable merchandising. The comic strip, following in the wake of toys, costumes and lunch boxes, arrived in September of 1951.

"A Thrilling, Educational Adventure Strip Based on Authentic, Scientific Fact!" announced ads for the new Tom Corbett feature. The strip began on a Sunday, with the opening caption explaining to us, "In the year 2351 A.D., Earth, Mars and Venus are united to form the great Solar Alliance...Here, at Space Academy, USA, the Space Cadets train to defend the liberties of the planets." We then are introduced to stalwart Tom, dimwitted Astro and sneaky Roger as they report to Captain Strong. We also view such future marvels as slidewalks, study-spools and very short skirts on the women. The captain, by the way, smokes a 20th Century pipe.

After some weeks at the academy, daily and Sunday, the three cadets "board the rocket cruiser Polaris to blast off on a secret mission." The initial mission involves invaders of the Venus Space Station and for the rest of its two year run **Space Cadet** is pretty much space opera. Not space opera of a particularly imaginative sort, just fastmoving adventure material projected four hundred years into the future. Certainly that's a formula that's worked many times for SF in all sorts of media, yet it failed to work for Tom and his gang when they invaded the funny papers.

The scriptwriter was Paul S. Newman, who also wrote the **Lone Ranger** strip until it was put out to pasture. The artist chosen was Ray Bailey. A gifted man, Bailey's whole career was one of never quite succeeding. Graduating out of a syndicate bullpen, he worked as Milton Caniff's assistant on **Terry and the Pirates** during most of World War II.

AS THAM SETS A NEW COURSE HIS VENUSIAN SENSES BRING HIM STARTLING NEWS FROM SPACE BEHIND!
THNIFF-- THNIFF--
--HE SIGNALS TO THE SPACE BOY, "I THMELL A THVIF--HEADED THITH WAY!!"
NOW I THEE IT--BUT IT DON'T THMELL RIGHT!

In 1945, he started his own strip, **Bruce Gentry**, which dealt with an ex-Air Force pilot trying to run an airline in South America. That one faltered after half a dozen years, not helped by competition from Caniff's superior **Steve Canyon**. Bailey rendered **Space Cadet** in his lushly inked version of the Caniff style and while the strip was impressive to look at, it was never that fascinating to read. It could have used more of what Tom and Astro were continually wishing everybody — "Spaceman's luck!"

PLANETEER

Several other syndicates tried their luck with SF in the Fifties. NEA, for instance, came up with **Chris Welkin, Planeteer** a couple months after Tom and his cronies hit the newspapers. Although Chris called himself a planeteer, he was close to being what you'd call an astronaut. The strip emphasized the technological and training aspects of that profession. The author was Russ Winterbotham, an NEA staff member who also had considerable credits in the science fiction field. He'd sold his first story to **Astounding** in 1935, written for other pulps and turned out several novels. A somewhat prosaic writer, he at least brought some knowledge of real science fiction to the job. The bland imitation-Caniff artwork was by Art Sansom, who wisely switched to bigfoot and achieved greater success with **Born Loser**.

BEYOND MARS

Jack Williamson got his job of writing and creating **Beyond Mars** through an accident. His novel **Seetee Ship** received a somewhat patronizing review in the New York **Times**. "It is a pity that the quality of the writing is such that this 'space opera' ranks only slightly above that of a comic strip adventure," is how the reviewer summed up the book. Reading that, some editors at the rival New York **News** decided that Williamson was just the man they wanted to write a new science fiction adventure strip for them.

"That was when tv had just begun to hurt the circulation of Sunday papers," Williamson once told me. "Somebody at the **News** noticed that all the competing papers had the same comics and that the **News** might gain a competitive edge by developing some original strips of its own." Using the novels about Seetee — CT stood for contraterrene, better known these days as anit-matter — as a basis, Williamson invented a tabloid page about Mike Fling, a "licensed spatial engineer," who lived two hundred some years in the future on Brooklyn rock in the asteroid belt. It was a time when "a new force — paragravity — has enabled men to live and breathe on the asteroids." According to Williamson, "the plot pattern of the strip was taken more or less from **Dick Tracy**...Each episode involved a conflict with a new villain, with a new group of colorful characters."

He also recalls his copy was frequently altered to fit "the

A SAMPLE STRIP FROM PLANETEER

YOU SEE, MELLO, THIS MANNED SATELLITE WILL DIP IN AND OUT OF THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE--
IT'S DISCRIMINATION!
DISCRIMINATION?
WHY MUST MEN DO EVERYTHING? SEND UP A WOMANED SATELLITE!
LATER, CHRIS DISCUSSES THE PROJECT WITH ROCKET EXPERT NOEL LESS AND AMAIZA
SO MELLO THINKS A WOMAN SHOULD DO THE JOB... MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT, CHRIS. THERE ARE CERTAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS--
BUT--
YES, CHRIS! REMEMBER, YOU PUT ME IN CHARGE OF THIS, AND I'LL ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PICKING THE PASSENGER!
YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT, PAL!
NOT KNOWING LESS'S PLANS, MELLO CONDITIONS HERSELF FOR THE TRIP--
I'LL SHOW CHRIS WELKIN THAT A WOMAN CAN DO ANYTHING A MAN CAN DO! I'LL TRAIN REAL HARD!

News' notion of which ideas and assumptions the readers could understand and accept." Despite these handicaps, Williamson managed to construct a fast-moving adventure feature with touches of both real SF and real humor. The artist was Lee Elias, a comic book graduate and yet another disciple of Milton Caniff. Maybe Caniff ought to be given a special Hugo award for all the SF strips he's influenced. Elias did an attractive job, but after three years the **News** lost interest in the notion of having its own exclusive features and **Beyond Mars** was dropped.

JET SCOTT

The autumn of 1953 saw the arrival of a new science fiction hero who "was not a ray-blasting space ranger but a scientific investigator for the Pentagon."This was Jet Scott, who worked for a little known branch of the Pentagon called the Office of Scientifact — anyone slick enough to work for them would presumably know exactly how you pronounce that word. A dark, lanky man, Scott specialized in cases involving such then-fresh topics as sonic weapons, the illegal dumping of toxic chemical wastes, the bootleg use of plutonium, etc.

Jet Scott was a product of teamwork between Jerry Robinson and Sheldon Stark. Stark had been involved in writing strips since the 1930s, having done the less than successful **Inspector Wade of Scotland Yard** for King Features, and had also scripted the *Straight Arrow* radio show. Robinson was fresh out of comic books. A boy wonder, he'd begun working as Bob Kane's assistant on **Batman** while in his teens. After soloing on **Batman** and other Golden Age features, he teamed up with the gifted Mort Meskin to do some memorable work in the late 1940s — on such comic book features as **The Black Terror** and **The Vigilante**. His drawing on **Jet Scott** was somewhat in the Meskin tradition and quite impressive. The strip was a relatively sophisticated one and the slim, stylish women who inhabited its panels bore provocative names like Tawney, Feather, Topaz and Safron. It managed to hold on for not quite two years.

DRIFT MARLO

In 1957, comic book veterans Jack Kirby and Wally Wood launched a strip about the space program. It was called **Sky Masters** and didn't thrive. **Drift Marlo**, by technical writer Phil Evans and artist Tom Cooke, made its initial appearance in May of 1961. Drift's costume consisted of a business suit and he was a scientific fellow working on a space program that was a few years ahead of ours. He landed on the moon, for instance, in 1965. Cooke had been an assistant on **Mary**

RON GOULART'S OWN STAR HAWKS—ART BY GIL KANE

"THEN WE VISITED RAKER IN HIS LAIR..."
KARASH!
YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHAT YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH WITH AN ENORMOUS ROBOT FOR A SIDEKICK!
KANE
5-26
© 1978 G.K. Inc.

Worth and **Drift Mario** looks like a sort of high tech soap opera. The dialogue, though laced through with authentic-sounding jargon, also has a soapy feel. When Drift decides to jaunt to the Moon to rescue a marooned robot pal, his ladyfriend cautions, "But, Drift, isn't such a flight premature? It will take MONTHS to evaluate data coming from the moon lab!" He replies, "We're not waiting for evaluations, baby!" At the moment of liftoff Drift reflects, "238,000 miles to go! This will be the LONGEST FOUR DAYS IN MY LIFE!" Drift also had to worry about a very slinky lady spy named Carla. She was employed by an apparently foreign organization called Space Intelligence Command, also known as SIC.

Tom Cooke suffered serious injuries in an auto accident in the fall of 1965. The strip continued for another few months with art by Mike Arens. **Drift Marlo**, which had been self-syndicated by Evans and Cooke, folded early in 1966. It was to be just about the only serious science fiction strip launched in the Sixties.

DIM FUTURE

The late 1960s and the early 1970s saw another rise of funny stuff in the comic sections and adventure of any kind was not in demand. Long term adventurers like Smilin' Jack and Terry Lee threw in the towel. Even that unsinkable redheaded waif Annie was laid off for awhile. It was not a time to introduce new SF strips. By the late 1970s, however, syndicates were starting to think that science fiction and adventure might make it again.

The late 1970s saw the advent of **Star Hawks** — written by me, drawn by Gil Kane — and then **Star Wars**, **Star Trek** and a new version of **Buck Rogers** drawn by Gray Morrow. None of these thrived and it's likely there will be few if any new SF strips coming along in the future. And on this perhaps glum note we conclude our survey.

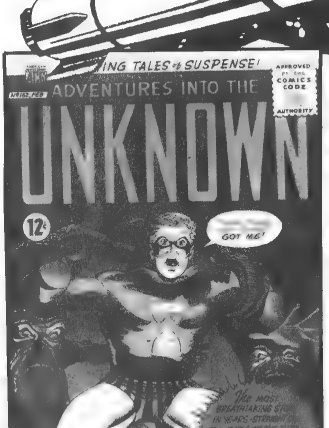
CF

NEXT: The heroines of comic strips, a new series!

RON GOULART is co-creator of the **Star Hawks** comic strip along with Gil Kane. He has over 140 books to his name along with various articles in major publications in too many fields to mention. He has won awards for mystery, science fiction and western stories and is considered to be one of the world's leading experts in popular culture.

SILVER AGE

BY WILL MURRAY



ACG

COSTUMED HEROES

Editor Richard Hughes had a problem. In the mid-Sixties he was busily editing a line of fantasy titles for his American Comics Group — among them **Adventures Into the Unknown** and **Forbidden Worlds** — which featured a kind of supernatural fantasy he loved. His one concession to reader demand was the very offtrail **Herbie**, a fantasy humor title he spun off from **Forbidden Worlds** when readers refused to let that offbeat character fade away.

But despite a loyal following, his readers, after more than a decade of Hughes-style material, were growing dissatisfied.

They wanted Superheroes. Nothing less would do.

Despite having been the guiding light behind such fondly-remembered Golden Age heroes as Skyman, the Black Terror and the Grim Reaper, Hughes was against In-

troducing what he called "costumed characters" into the pages of his tiny line. He argued against it in his friendly letters columns. He pointed out that superheroes were a fad, and always had been. In the entire history of ACG, the company had never published a superhero title. The closest they had come was **Magic Agent**, a 1962 title about a secret agent with magical powers. It lasted three issues. Some readers supported Hughes' position, but it seemed to be a losing argument. In 1964, he relented.

MAGIC MAN

First came Magicman in **Forbidden Worlds**.

Hughes had always told his readers that only a superhero who fit ACG's supernatural slant would ever penetrate his magazines. Magicman was exactly that way.

He made his first appearance in **Forbidden Worlds** 125, dated January-February, 1965, pulverizing the North Vietnamese for three pages of a story called, with elegant simplicity, "Magicman!" Then Magicman dropped onto a tree branch and began talking, as it were, to the camera.

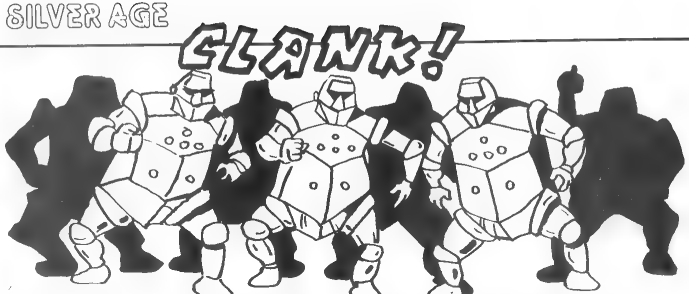
"YOU, reader — let's talk! You must be curious about how I came to be — well — what I am, MAGICMAN! It's kind of an interesting story — mind if I tell you?"

In this chatty fashion, Readers first learned the origin of Magicman back in the closing months of 1964. Magicman was a handsome young man endowed with incredible powers of black magic — flight, great strength, invisibility and such less common superheroic talents as the ability to throw Rocs. Not rocks. Rocs. The Arabian Knights kind. It was his favorite trick. Unlike most pulp magicians, Magicman didn't earn his powers through trial or test. He was born with them.

Magicman was the son of the great wizard, Count Alessandro Cagliostro. that's right, the same Cagliostro who was born in 1743, and whose ghost presented John Force with the magic medallion that was his source of his powers in **Magic Agent**. It seems that after Cagliostro was arrested for witchcraft, his son went into hiding, afraid to use his inborn powers. For some reason, he never grew old. Constantly on the move, he changed identities and occupations over the centuries until 1962, when, calling himself Tom Cargill, he decided to join the U.S. Army and fight the Viet Cong. Must have been bored.

When a soldier buddy is killed by the enemy, Cargill decides to return to magic. Lying on his bunk, his thoughts ran like this: "A war's half won when you can strike fear into your opponent — and I've got to strike that fear! Just plain Tom Cargill can't do it — but some mysterious avenger with mysterious powers who could hit out of nowhere with lightning force COULD! I'll do that — as MAGICMAN!"

Rummaging through a theatrical supply trunk, he comes up with a costume — a green and black Aladdin outfit complete with pointy-toed slippers, purple cloak and green turban. Not to mention a skimpy black domino mask.



I don't know about you, but if I wished to strike fear into the hearts of my enemies, I can think of more startling ways to go than to evoke sandstorms and genies. But to each his own. Those who used to accuse Stan Lee of wallowing in cornball concepts obviously never read ACG.

Magicman occupied himself with clobbering the North Vietnamese leadership in his first adventure, incidentally rescuing a captured U.S. Senator. The story enjoyed a kind of whimsical charm that probably reminded a number of old-time readers of Captain Marvel. And well it should, because Magicman was drawn by former Captain Marvel artist, Pete Costanza. The script was credited to Zev Zimmer — none other than editor Richard Hughes.

NEMESIS

It was Hughes who created and scripted Magicman's brother ACG hero, Nemesis. In almost every way the best of the ACG heroes, Nemesis debuted in "Nemesis!", **Adventures into the Unknown** 154, February 1965. Despite being drawn by Costanza as well (Hughes signed this series Shane O'Shea), Nemesis was a more grim and serious series. At first.

The emotional tone of the strip may be a function of the fact that the hero was a dead man. Or to be more precise, he was a ghost. Blond detective Steve Flint is asked to look into the sabotage of America's space program by J. Edgar Hoover — whose FBI agents must have all had the week off.

Flint's investigation turned up a balding, one-eyed Mafia leader named Goratti. After Flint refuses a bribe, Goratti has him run down by a locomotive.

Most comics heroes would get the message right there, but when Flint arrives in the Unknown — Hughes' non-denominational version of Heaven — he pleads with the Grim Reaper to let him return to earth to stamp out the Mafia. It's against the rules, but as it turns out, the current reigning Grim Reaper is also a Goratti murder victim. Small afterlife. He makes a pass of his hand and Steve Flint, corpse, is transformed into Nemesis, vengeful ghost.

"I'll be a phantom avenger — and men will know me as NEMESIS!" intones Flint. And then he throws the drama of the moment away as he flies off, shouting, "YA-HOOOOO! Earth — MAKE WAY FOR NEMESIS!"

In costume, Nemesis wears a red shirt with an hourglass on his chest — symbolizing time running out for the Mafia, I guess—striped trunks, blue boots and gauntlets and a blue Grim Reaper-style hood which, in later issues, kept slipping back to expose his handsome face and tousled blond hair. Oh, Nemesis also wore a skimpy black domino mask. Probably out of a theatrical supply trunk, too.

Richard Hughes was not afraid to toy with real life elements like the Mafia. Nor was he adverse to his heroes bumping off bad guys. After trashing Goratti's inexplicable attacks on our missile system, Nemesis hurls Goratti at a missile, which just happens to launch at that precise moment. The exhaust annihilates Goratti.

End of story? Yes and no. Nemesis has won, but the ghost of Goratti vows to turn his new phantom powers against Nemesis. Never mind that nobody's ghostly powers were ever clearly defined — they included invisibility, intangibility, flight, super strength and just about the same powers Magicman possessed (although I never saw Nemesis throw Rocs. But he did turn into a talking dog once.) — Hughes tended to trot out whatever ghostly strengths or weaknesses a story needed to work.

In his second adventure, Nemesis continued his war against the Mafia. Meanwhile, Goratti unleashed an elemental force on the planet Unitim. This force is supposed to be one of the most ruthless and destructive things in the universe, but Pete Costanza drew him as a kind of cloudy circus fatman. Nemesis made short work of the elemental. Goratti, for his trouble, got tossed out of the Unknown and into Hell.

In the next issue, a resourceful Goratti had worked himself up from furnace stoker to one of Satan's most vicious

lieutenants. In Hughes' comic book universe, Satan was a very important player. Nemesis and Goratti went at it one last time. Nemesis killed Goratti again. He tossed his ghost into a pit of flame demons who — as everyone knows — can kill even a ghost.

With Goratti no longer a menace, Nemesis now had to contend with a very angry satanic majesty. Unable to best the Devil in combat, Nemesis returned to Earth and came up with an imaginative plan. It seems that the Devil can be weakened by love and in centuries past, he loved a woman named Lita Revelli.

Nemesis found her descendant, Lita Revelli Craig, but a romance between her and Steve Flint blossomed. This did not thrill the Grim Reaper. Flint was on Earth with a mission. After he reveals himself as a ghost, Lita agrees to help Nemesis' war with Satan, who is waylaying souls bound for the Unknown.

All it took was a quick trip to Hell. Satan mistakes Lita for her ancestor — feels the urgings of love — and Nemesis steps in swinging. It's all over in seven panels. Back on Earth, Nemesis bids Lita a tearful farewell. He has to return to the Unknown, his home.

This semi-serous subplot continues into future issues, but with the fourth story, "Case of the Tittering Texan," the art chores for Nemesis descended upon Chic Stone's shoulders. Showing his recent stint as an inker on **The Fantastic Four** by a variety of Jack Kirby swipes — including turning Nemesis into the Human Torch whenever possible — Stone added greater comical touches to the strip. So did Hughes, whose scripts took on more of Magicman's tongue-in-cheek humor. This was a strange turn of events because Hughes claimed in one letter column that he took Costanza off Nemesis so the two strips wouldn't grow too much alike. Nemesis started talking directly to his readers, too.

DRAGONIA VS. MAGICMAN

Over at **Forbidden Worlds**, Magicman continued down his peculiar path. With the second story, Private Tom Cargill's topkick, Sergeant Kilkenny emerged as a kind of comic relief sidekick normally associated with Golden Age superhero stories. He never suspected Cargill of being Magicman, and rode him over the standard lateness, laziness and cowardice poses. You know that old routine.

After several issues, Cargill left the Army and returned stateside. Evidently, Hughes thought the Vietnam locale was too limiting. It was, and the change might have worked except that Sergeant Kilkenny also left the service and the two former adversaries ended up as roommates. Plausibility was not an ACG hallmark — or had you noticed?

Like Nemesis, Magicman had a recurring opponent. In "Magicman Meets Dragonia," Magicman first encounters the former Rosie Wong, a sales clerk turned fortune teller. Her fortune telling racket takes a strange turn when a fake seance turns real, and out of her mouth comes the voice of

a client's dead husband.

Rosie becomes Dragonia, a green and yellow suited Oriental witch, whose familiar is in the form of a supernatural black leopard. She turns to crime. Magicman, now more or less on call to various anti-crime authorities, goes after her, Kilkenny tagging along as usual. During a battle over an armored truck, the black leopard almost kills Magicman, but Dragonia pulls him off.

Magicman has his first inkling that Dragonia may not be all bad. But you wouldn't know it for the fighting they do, as the chase goes back in time and World War I is fought all over again with Magicman taking the Allied side.

When Magicman finally captures Dragonia, Kilkenny persuades Magicman and the law to go easy on her. No problem. It turns out Carghill has fallen in love with her.

A few issues later, Dragonia returned, this time as an agent of the Viet Cong. So, it was back to Vietnam for Magicman, in a story reminiscent of his first appearances. The plot is easily summarized. Dragonia battles U.S. troops. Magicman battles Dragonia. He's captured and depowered. But Dragonia hasn't the heart to finish him off. The grateful Communists decide to put them both before the firing squad. It would have worked, too, except that good old Kilkenny managed to infiltrate the firing squad and turn the tables. The good guys — and one bad girl — win. And Dragonia willingly agrees to finish her jail term.

CROSSOVER

Both Magicman and Nemesis started off with great promise. But as time passed, it was clear that Richard Hughes was growing bored. In **Forbidden Worlds** 136, Magicman met Nemesis in a Marvel-inspired story wherein the two good-natured heroes bruised one another in a case of mistaken identity brought on by a mad scientist whose Magicman robot has been turned to criminal ends.

It all ended well — although there was some friction over Kilkenny's attempt to make a pass at Lita Craig, who reciprocated as a way of making Nemesis jealous. She had by this time decided, ghost or no ghost, she wanted to marry Nemesis.

It was the first and only meeting of ACG's heroes — and then again it wasn't. Six months before they'd joined up with ACG's third costumed hero, the Fat Fury in the 14th issue of **Herbie**, the civilian name by which the Fat Fury was known. But I guess this meeting didn't count. Herbie was not exactly a serious character. Neither were Nemesis and Magicman when you get right down to it, but Herbie clearly occupied a different kind of reality. But it was an interesting story, if only to see how ACG's star artist, Ogden Whitney, handled Nemesis and Magicman. Not very well, I'm afraid.

MAGIC AGENT

Hughes had promised to keep his third fantasy title, **Unknown Worlds**, hero-free, but he relented a bit even there. Stories featuring John Force, Magic Agent appeared in every other issue, illustrated by Paul Reinman. Reinman had done the original comic, and it was his art style which Hughes later blamed for that magazine's failure. So it was strange that Hughes never replaced Reinman. John Force was a dead ringer for Nick Fury, eye patch, trench coat and all. His magic medallion gave him the powers of telepathy, and E.S.P., hypnosis and illusion-casting. Force worked for the American Security Group. At one time or other, his adventures appeared in every ACG title except **Herbie**.

In a way, Richard Hughes' opinions that the costumed heroes were a passing fad was vindicated. Sales of both **Forbidden Worlds** and **Adventures into the Unknow** slumped once its heroes got rolling. Hughes dropped them abruptly in the Winter of 1967, and scrambled to return both magazines to their original all-fantasy formula.

But it was too late. Hughes lost too many readers. His entire line disappeared overnight in 1968. Magicman and Nemesis were not missed, but ACG and Richard Hughes were. His warm little line was much-loved by comics readers in the early Sixties — both **Herbie** and **Forbidden Worlds** had won the prestigious Alley Award in 1964 — and ACG's loss has never been adequately replaced.

The company that had striven to avoid superheroes had been killed by superheroes.

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